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Summary: After Leo sacrifices himself to defeat Gaea, he wakes up in some kind of lab in Indiana with no memory. With so many strange things happening, such as the Upside Down, Will Byers's disappearance, and so many others, Leo must go on a journey with three boys to find their friend and Leo's memory and defeat the monster. Basically Stranger Things with Leo as Eleven, no Calypso, AU

1. The Lab

Leo is kind of OOC in this chapter, but taste because it's more of a prologue. Leo's humor will start showing up next chapter.

This is based off of Stranger Things with Leo as Eleven. If you have not seen Stranger Things, fear not. This follows the episodes and the story line, so you won't really be missing anything. Leo is Eleven, and it's from his point of view, so if you're missing a puzzle piece, that's because Leo doesn't have that information himself.

When it talks about Eleven, that is Leo. His 'new name' will be explained later.

Disclaimer: I own nothing

WARNINGS: UH... MURDER AND SOME BLOOD, IT'S ONLY LIKE ONE PARAGRAPH, MAYBE 2, THOUGH

"Are you sure about this, Hera? I mean, this doesn't concern him."

"But it concerns the gods. This monster is more dangerous than three grown Cyclopes, the Minotaur, and all the auri combined. If this thing isn't defeated, who knows what kind of havoc it could wreck?"

"But why him? Why not anyone else?"

"He is much stronger than many people realize. With his mental strength, his cleverness, his fire powers, and Hecate's gift of telekinesis, he will be able to stop this monster."

"When will we send him home?"

"When he defeats the monster."

"All right," he sighed before snapping his fingers. "I just hope you're right about this."

"Oh, believe me. I am."

It was all so fuzzy. He remembers pain... fire... blackness... voices... nothing else.

He sits up, sluggishly, his head pounding like crazy, and he is immediately on his feet, despite his shaking legs. He may not know where he was or where he's from, but he knows that whatever this place is is dangerous.

The room is small with metal walls, a metal door, and no windows. There's a bed fit for a scrawny child with white sheets and a white blanket and a thin pillow. There's nothing else.

The sudden bout of dizziness that hits him forces him to sit down, and for several moments, he just sits there. Too much in shock to move a muscle.

Creak... the door opens, and he shoots to his feet, nearly falling over again. When he tries to take a step, he did just that; he face plants the floor.

"Woah, Little One. Be careful, Eleven," a voice says from above him, and he's being lifted into someone's arms. Someone he doesn't know.

Eleven? Is that his name? He doesn't have time to worry about it because he doesn't know this man, and he's not about to relax in his presence. Therefore, he kicks him.

"Eleven... Eleven, stop it," the man commands, throwing him on the bed and holding the small boy down.

Eleven stops struggling, and finally gets a good look at the man. He's tall with pale skin and white hair. His eyes are not unkind, but definitely stern. He's wearing a lab coat and kakhi pants.

"Who are you?" Eleven croaks, his throat dry.

"Call me Papa. I found you wandering in the woods, Little One. I brought you here to keep you safe," he tells him.

"Then, why am I locked up?"

"Well, Eleven, you see, you're special. You can do things that no one

else can."

"Like what?"

"Well, we're about to show you, Little One. Come with me, but if you fight me or anyone else, I'll have to punish you, and I don't want to do that. Just remember that."

Eleven nods and allows himself to be pulled along down an empty corridor and into another, which is packed with people, most of whom stop in their tracks to stare. Papa holds him close, and Eleven wants desperately to throw him off and run; he doesn't trust this man quite yet.

He's taken into a white and bare room with a long table, a metal chair, and a wide window for the people to stare at him through.

Papa sits him down in the chair and sets an empty soda can in front of him.

"All right, Eleven. Now, I need you to concentrate really hard. Just imagine that soda can crushing, caving in on itself. Can you do that?"

Eleven doesn't see how, but he nods as Papa starts putting this weird net of cords and suction cups over his head, sticking the suction cups to his forehead.

"Keep this on, Eleven." Papa leaves to stand outside the window.

Eleven tries to do as Papa said. He concentrates on the can, imagining it crushing and compacting into a small, aluminum circle. At first, nothing happens. But then, it started melting.

The people outside watch on in amazement as the can suddenly smolders and melts into a silver and crimson puddle on the table, so hot that the wood sizzles and smokes.

Papa says something to another man, but Eleven can't hear it. And he gets distracted when a small droplet of blood drips onto his hospital gown and he's suddenly taken over with fatigue.

Papa opens the door and helps Eleven stumble to his feet.

"You did very good, Eleven."

Eleven started to adjust to a life in the lab. He never went outside, and he did what everyone said. Simple as that.

The times he hadn't done what others said... bad things happened.

At the end of a long corridor, there's a room. Small and dark and all metal and soundproof. No one hears Eleven scream when he's locked in there.

He's only been in there twice. The first time, he pounded on the door and screamed for someone-anyone- before giving up and sinking to the floor.

But the second time...

"NO! NO, LET ME GO!" Eleven screamed, kicking and punching the men holding him and dragging him down the corridor

Papa's standing at the end of the hall, watching with a sad and disappointed expression on his face.

"PAPA!"

Eleven is thrown through the open doorway, but right before the men can close it, he uses his mind to throw one of them into the wall, breaking his neck. Then, he narrows in on the other man, the one that liked to hit him when he didn't do something right or fast enough. The man starts to scream and shiny burns appear all over his skin; blood drips down his body, staining his clothes before he collapses to the floor, his eyes wide open and empty.

The adrenaline leaves, and Eleven collapses, falling against the wall as blood drips from his nose and little cuts that suddenly appeared on his arms and chest.

Papa steps inside and picks him up without a word; Eleven promptly passes out.

When Eleven comes to, Papa's sitting him in a chair in that experiment room, the one he'd been in when he melted the soda can.

"Papa," he whispers.

"Shh, it's okay, now Eleven."

He sits beside Eleven, placing a picture on the table.

"You see this man, Eleven?" Papa asks, pointing at the man in the photo.

"Hurt him," Eleven whispers, still traumatized from what occurred with the men and his powers less than fifteen minutes before.

"No," Papa corrects him. "I don't want you to hurt him. I want you to find him."

"Find him," Eleven repeats.

"Yes," Papa responds. "I want you to find him and then repeat what he says back to me. Can you do that?"

"Yes, Papa."

"Good," Papa replies. "Go find him, Eleven."

Eleven sighs and closes his eyes.

When he opens them, he finds himself in a dark plane with water covering the floor and soaking his bare feet. There's nothing but darkness and water.

"Green, Cat, Mouse, Water."

Eleven looks up, and he slowly begins to follow the voice, walking across the dark plane until he spots the man from the photograph.

He's sitting at a silver table, much like the one Eleven was sitting at before he found himself in the dark plane.

"Eleven?" Papa's voice echoes through the entire plane, but Eleven's eyes don't leave the man at the table. "Eleven, repeat the words."

"Sister, Shell, Care," the man states.

"Eleven, repeat the words back to me."

Meanwhile, in our world, Papa (aka Dr. Brenner) glances up in astonishment when the lights flicker before the room becomes dark.

"Fish, book, parakeet," the voice of the man (aka employee Thomas Walsh) blares from the speakers on the walls.

"Extraordinary," Brenner murmurs.

The door creaks open, and Eleven sits up in his bed, his stuffed lion (Papa had given it to him a while ago, but Eleven didn't know when exactly. He had no way to keep track of time in the lab) sitting on his lap.

"Hello, Eleven," Papa says with a smile as he sits on the edge of Eleven's bed. "It's time."

"The bathtub?" Eleven mumbles, remembering the conversation Papa and some other men had had about him the other day.

Papa nods. "The bathtub."

Eleven is wearing a skintight outfit that has metal woven into some parts of it, such as the padding over the stomach and the back. It's a cream color and only covers Eleven's top half and a few inches down his legs; there are no sleeves and Eleven shivers in the cool air of the room.

There are tons of machines and objects Eleven doesn't recognize. Men that Eleven knows (both kind and mean) are scattered around the room.

"Come along, Eleven," Papa urges, pulling Eleven over to some metal steps.

Eleven climbs them on shaky legs, and Papa guides him to a huge tank filled with water. A rod dangles from ropes over the water,

almost like the perch in bird cages. Papa places a hand on Eleven's back and nods, motioning for the boy to step onto the rod.

Eleven obeys, and Papa steps back as the rod begins to lower, using a pulley system (Eleven isn't sure how he knows that), slowly bringing Eleven down into the water.

Right before Eleven's head dips beneath the water, a man slips a huge helmet over his head to prevent the boy from drowning (kind of like astronaut helmets but for underwater purposes).

Then, Eleven is completely submerged in the water, and he steps off of the rod and into the tank, hearing the rod return to the surface behind him. Somebody shuts the top of the tank, leaving Eleven trapped inside.

Eleven feels fear take hold of him, and he presses his hand against the plastic of the tank, as though reaching for Papa on the other side. A panel slides shut, and Eleven is left in complete and utter darkness.

Eleven closes his eyes.

When he opens them, he finds himself back on the dark plane.

Beforehand, Eleven had been given a photograph of a man and instructions to find him. It didn't take long, but that didn't necessarily mean the task went without a hitch.

The man stands in the dark plane, and he says words that Eleven doesn't understand, speaking with a heavy accent that Eleven vaguely recognizes, although he doesn't know from where. Russian, maybe?

Eleven is about to use his powers to rig the man's voice to come out of the speakers at the lab, but before he gets the chance, a noise makes him stop.

It's a guttural sound, harsh and an almost wet kind of sound. It's the kind of sound that is produced when someone-or something- is eating in a fast and sloppy manner. In between this particular sound, growls echo across the plane before the sound resumes.

Eleven turns toward the sound as the man vanishes in a puff of

smoke, and he sees... he sees...

He isn't really sure what it is. He can only make out a vague outline in the distance.

Eleven takes a couple of steps forward, his feet whispering on the surface of the water.

Eleven stops dead two yards from the thing.

It's a hideous creature with skin that is tinged blue and stretched over protruding, razor sharp bones. It's head is free of hair, and the sound it makes rings throughout the plane, invading Eleven's ears.

Eleven doesn't hesitate. He turns on his heel and runs, his bare feet splashing in the water.

The dark plane melts away, and Eleven is back in the bath tub, sobbing and whimpering in fear. The water quivers with his shaky powers.

It's over. He's safe...

Or so he thinks.

Eleven curls up on his bed, his knees drawn to his chest, and he doesn't look up when Papa steps into his bedroom.

"Hello, Eleven," Papa greets.

Eleven nods in acknowledgement, and Papa sits on the edge of the bed.

"Eleven, you're going back to the bathtub, and this time, we make contact," Papa tells him, referring to the monster in the dark plane. "This time, I don't want you to run from it. It's calling to you, Eleven. So don't turn away from it."

Eleven nods, although his hands have already begun to shake.

"Today," Papa says, "we make history."

Papa holds Eleven's hand as they walk into the bathtub room, as Eleven calls it, but this time, the room is filled with men in suits that Eleven doesn't know.

"They're all friends, Eleven," Papa assures him. "They're just here to watch."

Eleven nods, nervously, and Papa escorts him up the flight of metal steps. Eleven takes a deep breath before stepping onto the perch hanging above the tank.

"It can't hurt you. Not from here. It's calling to you, Eleven," Papa repeats, "so don't turn away from it."

Eleven nods. "Yes, Papa."

Papa steps back, and the perch begins to lower, the pulleys squealing. The helmet is placed over Eleven's head, and he is completely emerged in water.

The perch returns to the surface, and the panels above and in front of Eleven close, leaving him in darkness.

Eleven hears the sound before he even opens his eyes, and when he does, he wishes desperately that he could close them again.

The monster is a few yards away, feasting just like last time.

"Don't turn away from it."

Eleven takes a few steps forward, his footsteps on the water murmuring with each step.

"Don't turn away from it."

Eleven stops less than a foot from the monster, and he raises a hand, pointing two fingers at the beast.

"Don't turn away from it."

Eleven brings his quivering fingers closer to the monster.

"Don't turn away from it."

Eleven's fingers touch the monster's skin, squishing into the blue, almost fake skin until his fingers tap against the bone.

The monster whirls around, screeching, and for the first time, Eleven gets a good look at it.

It has blueish skin that drips with gooey slime and is smeared with what appears to be blood. Its body is bony and disgusting and grotesque, but the worst part is its face, or more accurately, lack thereof. The thing has no face, just flaps that remind Eleven of a very angry flower and when it screechs, he sees a horrible mouth of razor sharp teeth that a full grown shark would be frightened of.

Eleven's eyes fly open, and he screams, blood trickling out of his nose and over his lips (nosebleeds are a side effect of using his powers).

The walls of the lab begin to crack, as though something is plowing through the concrete, and doctors and scientists run for the doors, screeching in fright and confusion.

Eleven's powers run wild, and the walls of the tank-the metal walls, I might add- crack, shattering open and releasing several gallons of water and the boy trapped inside.

Eleven sees chaos. Men racing around like headless chickens, screaming, while the walls crack and break around them.

No one is paying attention to Eleven (for the first time since he entered the lab). They're all too busy trying to escape the room.

Eleven takes advantage of this. He's scared and frightened, and he can't find Papa, so he does what he does best (although he isn't sure how he knows that).

He runs.

Eleven makes it outside of the room and the lab altogether. There is no one outside, no one watching; they're all inside, trying to get the situation under control.

Eleven can escape, but how? There's a fence three times as tall as Eleven.

Eleven spots a pipe jutting out of the ground. A grown man-heck, an average sized teenager- couldn't fit through it, but Eleven, who was scrawny to begin with and was rarely fed in the lab, could fit through.

Eleven kneels on the ground at the entrance to the pipe and begins to crawl.

If you have seen Stranger Things, this chapter will make a lot of sense to you. If you haven't, that's okay, and if you're confused, that's okay, too, because this story is a mystery. Everything will be answered in time. Besides, if I don't confuse you at some point in the story, it won't be a mystery, so watch out for that.

Next chapter will start to divert away from the original story line of Stranger Things for those of you that have seen it, by the way.

Reviews keep me updating!

2. Benny's Hospitality and His Death

A bit of a shorter chapter, but next chapter will make up for it.

REVIEWS:

Sameen: *Leo will start to slowly regain his memories. The process will probably start next chapter because that's when the story line starts to differ from that of Stranger Things. Right now, it's more following the exact story line of the show, but next chapter it'll start to change as Leo's role starts to develop.*

Never Again: *yes, reviews do keep me updating, I haven't been updating some of my stories lately because I accepted some prompts from a person that were either multiple chapters or 5000-9000 words or more, so that kept me busy, but I'm working on an updating schedule.*

Guest: *Honestly, I'm not even sure where the idea came from. I was just watching Stranger Things and thought I love Leo Valdez; I love Stranger Things. Why don't I combine them? And this happened.*

Disclaimer: *I own nothing*

WARNINGS: MURDER, VIOLENCE

The leaves crackled beneath Eleven's bare feet as he trekked across the ground.

He was now wearing a hospital gown, which he had quickly grabbed and changed into because the water suit he'd been wearing had made it hard to run. Dirt covered his face and skin and the ripped gown he was wearing. The humidity of the day circulated through the air, making Eleven's skin become sticky with perspiration.

Eleven didn't know how long he had been walking, much less how long he'd been crawling through the pipe, but he was at least a few miles from the lab. For a while, he was in the clear.

Eleven stumbled across a building in the center of the forest and a few yards off the road. It was a gray, one story building with

windows, and the door was open.

A man exited the door with a black bag in his hands, and he tossed it into the dumpster beside the building before returning to the inside.

Eleven could smell the scent of food in the air. He hadn't eaten a decent meal since he'd come to the lab, and before then... he didn't even remember his life before the lab. All Eleven knew was that he was starving.

Eleven walked closer to the building.

Eleven pushed the doors open, and he slowly walked inside.

He found himself in a kitchen. Metal counters, an oven, a grill, and...

Eleven's mouth watered. Food.

Eleven walked further into the kitchen and stood beside the counter, where he found a basket of fries. He'd never had fries himself (at least that he remembered), but he'd seen the men in the lab eat them before.

Eleven peaked over the counter and watched as the man he'd seen outside spoke with a man that had a beard and was eating a burger. They were laughing, like they were... Eleven didn't know the word, but it was right on the tip of his tongue.

Eleven looked down at the fries, and slowly, he picked one up and placed it in his mouth

Eleven's eyes widened as a burst of flavor hit his tongue. Grease flooded his mouth, and the soft texture on the inside of the french fry flowed over his teeth and tongue.

This was the best food he had ever tasted.

Eleven picked up handfuls of the fries and inhaled them, stuffing them into his mouth and down his throat. His body and mind were screaming at him to fill the empty void of his stomach, and Eleven happily obliged.

Meanwhile, in the main area of the restaurant, the owner laughed before turning to head back to the kitchen.

He saw a young child with a buzz cut leaning over the counter and eating the food that had been sitting there.

"Hey!" The man yelled in outrage.

Eleven jolted his head up, his cheeks stuffed like a chipmunk's, to see the man staring at him in anger. His lips were pulled into a snarl.

Eleven grabbed the basket of fries, swallowing the bite in his mouth, before bolting for the door.

"Get back here!" The man yelled, chasing Eleven as he ran for the door.

Hands grabbed the back of his hospital gown, and the fries scattered everywhere as the basket clattered to the ground. Hands whipped Eleven around and held him by the upper arms.

The man's face was red with rage. He reminded Eleven of some of the mean men in the lab, and Eleven waited to be struck, or worse. Dragged to The Room.

"You think you can steal from me, boy?" The man growled, but then, he froze.

The man took in Eleven's bloody nose, the torn hospital gown, his dirty face, his scrawny form (obviously malnourished), and the wild eyed expression. Eleven flinched at the shout, and he tried to shield his face, but the man still had him by the arms.

"What the heck?" The man muttered.

Eleven trembled.

"Hey," the man said. "It's okay. Let's go back inside. I'll make you some food."

Eleven's fear and surprise was overwhelmed by the starvation he was experiencing, and he allowed the man to lead him to a break room.

Eleven was handed an orange shirt that came to his knees, which he changed into. When Eleven ducked back outside, the man laid the hospital gown over a chair and took Eleven to the main part of the restaurant, where the tables were. The other man had left, and the owner gestured to a chair, which Eleven took a seat in.

The man headed back to the kitchen and made a burger on the grill before returning to sit across from Eleven. He pushed a basket of fries and a hamburger across the metal table, which Eleven picked up and began to stuff the burger in his mouth. His powers drained his energy, and the lab didn't feed him well, so Eleven felt like he could eat twenty more of these baskets of food and still be asking for more.

"Geesh," the man laughed before growing serious. "Your parents forget to feed you? That why you ran away?"

Parents, as in plural? Eleven only had Papa. Who else was he supposed to have?

"They..." The man swallowed. "They hurt you?"

Eleven didn't respond as he continued to eat.

"You went to the hospital; you got scared; you ran away; you wound up here. Is that it?" The man asked.

Eleven stayed quiet.

The man sighed before reaching forward and taking the burger and pulling the basket away.

"I'll give this back," the man promised, "and you can have as much as you want, maybe even some ice cream, but you have to answer some of my questions first."

A pause as Eleven watched the man.

"Do we have a deal?"

Eleven gave the slightest nod, almost unnoticeable.

"Okay," the man replied. "Let's start with the easy stuff."

He stuck his hand out, resting his arm on the table.

"My name's Benny. And you?"

Eleven stared at his hand in confusion before looking back at the man. In the lab, Papa was really the only one that directly addressed Eleven, and Eleven's contact with other people (aside from the Bad Men in the lab) was little to none.

"Here," Benny said, taking Eleven's hand. Eleven flinched and tried to pull away, but Benny held onto his hand, gently. "It's okay."

Benny pulled Eleven's arm forward and clasped Eleven's hand.

"Nice to meet you. What's your name?"

Eleven blinked before saying, "Eleven."

Benny frowned. "What do you mean?"

Eleven turned his wrist over to display 011 tattooed right beneath the collection of veins. He'd been given the tattoo on his first day in the lab.

Benny looked at little frightened by it.

"How old are you?" Benny asked.

Eleven frowned before shaking his head.

"You don't know?"

Eleven shook his head to confirm that.

Benny sighed. "Okay. You keep eating. I'm going to go make you another," he said as he pushed the basket across the table and Eleven continued to devour the food.

"Take it easy," Benny laughed as he stood.

"All I know is he's scared to death. I think he's been abused or kidnapped or something, " Benny said to the social worker on the phone. "Yeah, it would be great if someone came by. We're at 4819

Randolph Lane. Thanks."

An irritating sound grated on Eleven's ears, and he looked up to see a fan spinning in the corner of the room. It whirled with an annoying creaking sound, and Eleven glared at it.

The fan abruptly stopped spinning.

Benny hadn't noticed, and Eleven continued to eat as though nothing had happened.

Eleven took back what he said about French fries. Ice cream was the best food in existence.

"You like that ice cream, don't you?" Benny laughed as he did the dishes.

Eleven smiled as he licked the spoon.

"A smile looks good on you," Benny said.

Eleven blinked.

"You know? Smile?" Benny said before grinning with his teeth showing. Eleven mimicked the action, and it felt so natural, he wondered why he hadn't started smiling sooner.

A knock echoed through the silent restaurant, making Eleven's jump, the moment officially broken.

"It's okay," Benny said. "Whoever it is, I'll tell them to go away real fast."

Benny walked through the restaurant to answer the door, and Eleven tried to listen, but he only caught snippets of the conversation.

"Social..."

"Haven't told him..."

"Dead skittish..."

"Usually are..."

A woman followed Benny through the door. She was pretty and blonde and middle aged, wearing a black shirt and jacket with a bag over her shoulder. She looked vaguely familiar.

"It's funny," Benny laughed as he began to turn around. "Your voice sounded different on the ph-"

BANG!

A gun went off, and a bullet lodged himself in the side of Benny head. Benny didn't even know what hit him.

Eleven tossed the ice cream and the spoon to the floor with a clatter before leaping off the counter and running through the kitchen doors.

Two men busted through the back doors with guns aimed at Eleven.

The lights began to flicker, crackling and popping and fizzling as power radiated off of Eleven.

He screamed as two bullets flew out of the guns and into the men's brains effectively killing them, before the guns melted into unidentifiable pools of blackness.

Eleven ran out the door and didn't stop running, nor did he look back, until the he heard the voices.

By then, it had started to pour down rain, and Eleven was soaked to the bone and shivering, which was due to both the frigid rain and the fear coursing through his veins.

"Dustin, if you want to be a baby, then, go home already!" A voice shouted over the rain.

"I'm just being realistic, Lucas!"

Eleven peaked between the threes and saw three young boys with their hoods up, walking through the rain with flashlights.

"No, you're just being a big sissy."

"Did you ever think that will went missing because he ran into

something bad? And we're going in the exact same direction as where he was last seen? And we have no weapons or anything?"

"Dustin, shut up," the remaining one-the one who hadn't spoken- said, listening intently.

"I'm just saying. Does that seem smart to you?"

"Dustin, shut up," he repeated.

He'd heard Eleven's footsteps. Eleven had to get out of here.

Eleven ran, his feet crashing over the fallen leaves.

The boys whipped around, shining their flashlights in the exact place Eleven had been moments before.

Eleven continued to race around them, his feet thundering against the ground.

The boys whirled around, their flashlights shining upon Eleven, who froze like a deer caught in a headlight.

He'd been caught.

3. Promises And Lost Memories

I know it's been a while. I apologize, but this chapter should more than make up for it. Over 6000 words!

ALSO, IMPORTANT: LEO HAS BEEN DEAGED TO AGE 12. THAT IS BECAUSE I DIDN'T THINK A 16 YEAR OLD WOULD CLICK WITH TWELVE YEAR OLDS (THOSE TWELVE YEAR OLDS ARE INTRODUCED THIS CHAPTER) AS MUCH

Disclaimer: I own nothing

Eleven felt like an idiot going with the strange boys when he should have kept running until he was so far away from the Bad Place, they'd never find him... But he was cold and wet and would probably catch pneumonia if he stayed out in the rain. If he was sick, he wouldn't be running anywhere. Besides, maybe the boys would let him hide with them until Eleven found out how to get away from the Bad People. He made a judgment call and allowed the three boys to lead him to their house.

Eleven sat on the couch in Benny's soaked T-shirt with a jacket wrapped around his shoulders. Frigid drops of water dripped from his curly hair (Eleven had never really noticed his curly hair until it was so wet, the curls fell in his eyes). Raindrops trickled down his face and arms and water drenched his legs.

"Is there a number we can call?" one of the boys- a freckled kid with dark brown hair and green eyes- asked, frantically. "For your parents?"

"What happened to your face?" one of the others- a chubby male with curly brown hair pinned beneath a hat- asked with wide eyes.

Eleven vaguely wondered what he was talking about. What was wrong with his face?

"Where did you come from? Who are you?" a slim, dark skinned boy demanded.

"Is that blood?" the curly haired kid asked, reaching for Eleven's bloody nose, and the freckled kid smacked his hand away.

"Stop! You're freaking him out!" the freckled boy said.

Yes, Eleven thought. You certainly are.

"He's freaking *me* out!" the dark skinned boy countered.

I get that a lot, Eleven thought before wondering how he knew that. He never heard that in the lab (although he suspected that he freaked the scientists out quite a bit; they never said anything, though).

"I bet he's deaf!" the curly haired boy said, and he clapped his hand with a thunderous smack, causing Eleven to jump.

The other boys stared at him, and he shrugged.

"Not deaf," he said.

"Stop!" the freckled boy ordered. "He's just scared and cold."

The boy departed from the group and returned with some clothes; he handed them to Eleven, who stared at them in confusion and suspicion.

"These are clean," the boy said.

Eleven wiped some water from his face and stood before reaching for the bottom of the long shirt.

"Wait!" Lucas yelled before hissing to the freckled boy. "What if he has nothing under that?"

The freckled boy blinked. "Good point. I'll show you the bathroom."

Eleven followed the freckled boy across the room and stepped into the room he gestured to- The bathroom.

The boy went to close the door, and Eleven lashed out with the reflexes of a cheetah and grabbed hold of the door. He didn't want to be locked in a small room... he didn't want his mind to go back

There.

"You don't want it closed?" the freckled boy asked.

"No," Eleven responded.

The boy's eyes widened. "Oh, so you can speak. All right, I'll just leave the door... like this," the boy suggested, cracking the door. "That okay?"

Eleven nodded. "Thank you."

The boy smiled and walked away.

Eleven turned around, and he froze when he found himself faced with his reflection. There were no mirrors in the lab; he had no idea what he looked like until now. Now, he knew what the curly haired kid had been talking about when he asked what happened to his face.

He was Latino with tan skin and a scrawny form. His curls were long and unruly, nearly reaching his shoulders, and his features were impish. His ears were pointed like an elf's. His eyes were a chocolate brown with what appeared to be an orange glint to them-like firewood. But the thing that really caught his attention was the scar.

It was long and jagged, running from just below his left temple to a mere millimeter from the bottom of his nose, racing diagonally across his cheek bone.

How had he gotten it? How long had it been there?

Eleven dressed himself in the clothes the boy had give him, and when he exited the bathroom, he saw the freckled boy constructing some sort of fort made out of blankets on the floor.

"You'll sleep here tonight," the freckled boy explained while his oddly quiet friends gathered their things and placed them in their backpacks.

Eleven nodded and crawled into the cave of blankets, watching as the dark skinned boy and the curly haired kid climbed the stairs. They conversed in whispers and gave Eleven glances of distrust.

"Here you go," the freckled boy said, handing Eleven a stack of blankets.

The other boys gave Eleven one last suspicious and maybe even frightened glance before disappearing up the stairs.

"What's your name?" the freckled boy asked, sitting across from Eleven.

Eleven rolled up his sleeve to display the tattoo, and the freckled boy lashed out towards him.

"Is that real?"

Eleven pulled back, expecting the boy to strike him, but the boy just froze and pulled away.

"Sorry. I've just never seen a kid with a tattoo before. Eleven. What does it mean?"

Eleven prodded himself in the chest. He didn't speak unless he had to; Papa told him children are to be seen and not heard. Eleven learned that lesson the hard way...

"That's your name?" the boy asked.

"That's what I've been called for as long as I can remember," Eleven said, which was probably the longest sentence he'd said since he woke up in the lab.

As long as I can remember.

The thing is... the people in the lab called him Eleven, but it never felt right. Did he have a name before he lost his memory? If so, what was it? And why couldn't he remember anything?

The boy nodded. "My name's Mike, short for Michael. Why don't we call you Evan? Short for Eleven?"

Eleven nodded, even though the name still didn't feel right.

Mike smiled. "Okay. Night, Evan."

"Night, Mike," Eleven replied as the blanket fell over the fort, concealing Eleven behind a type of curtain.

That night, Eleven found himself in the black plane. Sometimes, Eleven traveled there in his sleep by mistake. The images he saw were brief and frazzled, like a bad connection, because he wasn't in the bathtub or using any other method to travel there. It was only his powers, and his powers, while strong, were far from fully developed.

"I don't know," a voice sighed, and Eleven turned.

In the distance, he could see a collection of teenagers. He couldn't tell how many there were because some of them were slightly blurry; it was like when a disc messes up or becomes scratched, and some pictures are little more than a collection of pixels while others are completely clear. Eleven's best guess was seven or eight teens, but only four of them were clear enough for Eleven to see their features in great detail.

Eleven walked towards them, curious and wanting to get a better look.

The person who had spoken was around thirteen or fourteen years of age, and he was dressed in a black T-shirt with dancing skeletons and dark jeans with rips around the knees. His sneakers were scuffed and muddy, like he ran in them a lot and never bothered to clean them or simply get new ones. A pitch black sword hung from his belt, and his raven locks were wild, falling into his dark eyes, which were rimmed with dark circles. His skin was nearly transparent. This kid couldn't have looked more unhealthy if he had a deadly disease.

"Something's different about his death," the boy added.

"I know what you mean," a girl said.

Eleven could also see the girl in great detail. She was around the same age as the boy- thirteen or fourteen- and she had dark skin, although it was lighter than the skin of the strange boy Eleven met in the woods. Her hair was curly and tamed into a low pony tail. Her eyes were golden, and she looked so innocent, but the golden sword

dangling from her belt still made Eleven nervous. She wore a purple T-shirt with the letters SPQR tattooed around the chest, and she wore shorts that came to a few inches above her knees.

"It's like he forged his own path to the Underworld," she explained. "He died, but something feels different about his death."

One of the other boys sighed.

The boy was older than either of the other kids. He was around sixteen with short cropped blond hair and blue eyes. He wore the same shirt as the girl and blue jeans. His eyes were an electric blue, reflected in the lenses of his square glasses. There was a small scar on his upper lip, and this boy felt so familiar. There was something familiar about the other two, but the feeling of familiarity was so intense with this blond kid, Eleven felt like the name was on the tip of his tongue, the memory barely brushing his fingertips as he reached for it.

"Give it up, guys," the boy sighed, sounding defeated. "Leo's dead. There's nothing else to it."

The boy stormed off, disappearing into the inky blackness of the plane.

"Jason!" one of the blurry teens called, and the blurry image vanished as the person- a girl by the sound of her voice- ran after the blond.

Jason.

Eleven was fiddling with some kind of walkie talkie/radio (it was awesome. If he only had some tools... somehow he knew he could make it twice as awesome with a few simple objects, like rubber bands or something) when the curtain blanket was lifted, and Mike appeared.

"You found my super com," he said with a smile. "I use it to talk to my friends. Mostly Lucas since he lives so close. The signal's pretty weak."

Eleven smiled and held up one finger in the universal sign for hang

on a minute before turning a few knobs and pressing a few buttons.

"Stronger," Eleven said, simply, handing Mike the walkie talkie.

Mike blinked before taking the walkie talkie.

"Dustin," he said. "Do you read?"

A moment of silence.

"I read," a voice said, and the voice was so clear, Dustin could've been in the same room with them.

Mike blinked. "Sorry. Never mind," he said before putting the antenna back down. "How did you do that?"

Eleven shrugged. "I don't know."

"Anyway, I brought you breakfast," Mike said, handing Eleven a waffle.

Eleven took a bite and smiled. This was a nice change from the awful lab food. Benny's was good, but Eleven decided he liked these waffles better.

"This is going to sound weird," Mike said, "but I need you to go outside and ring the doorbell. When my mom answers, tell her that you're lost and that you need help. It won't be a big deal. We'll just pretend to meet each other again. Understand?"

Eleven tapped his fingers against his leg.

Outside. Where the Bad Men could find him.

"No," Eleven said, firmly.

Mike frowned. "You don't want my mom to get help."

Eleven shook his head.

"You're in trouble, aren't you?" Mike realized.

Eleven nodded.

"Who are you in trouble with?"

"Bad," Eleven stated.

"Bad?" Mike asked. "Bad people? Do they want to hurt you?"

Eleven raised an eyebrow before holding out a fist.

"Rock, paper, scissors," he said.

Mike frowned, but held out his own fist. They bounced their fists against their palms while Mike chanted before Mike pulled out a rock and Eleven...

Eleven's hand formed a gun.

Eleven jerked his finger gun, like he was firing it.

"Bad," he explained before pointing it at himself. "Bad."

Mike blinked. "Oh, gosh," he muttered as he realized what Eleven was trying to say.

"Mike, we're going to be late!" A woman called from upstairs.

"I'll be right back," Mike said. "Stay here," he added as he hid Eleven from view with the blanket/curtain.

Mike returned after a few minutes, and Eleven stood, hearing his knees pop, having not stood up the entire night or morning.

Mike lead him up the stairs and through the doorway into a long hallway.

"You want something to drink? We have OJ, skim milk... what else?" Mike said as they walked into the living room. "This is my living room. It's mostly just for watching TV."

Eleven stared at the TV before picking up the remote sitting on top of it and smiling.

"What?" Mike asked.

"Make it better," Eleven replied, holding up the remote.

"How?" Mike questioned.

Eleven smiled and snapped off the back of the remote before disconnecting a few wires and pressing a few buttons.

Eleven wasn't even sure how he was doing it. He understood what he was doing, but he didn't know how he knew how to do it. After all, Papa had never taught him how to completely rewire a TV remote.

Eleven pressed the button labeled with a number 1.

The kitchen sink turned on, making Mike jump.

Eleven pressed 2.

The radio began to fizzle before the static became voices.

Eleven pressed 3.

The coffee maker whirled to life.

Eleven pressed 4.

Ice cubes tumbled out of the ice maker on the refrigerator.

Eleven pressed 5.

The doorbell rang, but when Mike glanced out the window, no one was there.

He stared at Eleven.

"How did you... the sink... the bell... the-the... how?" Mike stammered.

Eleven shrugged. "Don't know. Don't remember learning."

"You did that and you never learned how?" Mike said in disbelief. "My science teacher couldn't do that, and he used to teach engineering."

"I didn't say never learned," Eleven said (the bad grammar is intentional. Leo's memories getting taken kind of frazzled his brain, resulting in confusion with speech and jumbled up words. That's one of the reasons why he doesn't talk much, even though he knows how). "I said don't remember learning."

"You don't remember?" Mike asked with a frown.

Eleven shook his head. "Don't remember anything before a few months ago. All blank."

Mike blinked. "So... is Eleven your real name?"

"Don't think so," Eleven said. "Doesn't feel right."

Mike nodded. "Do you know what happened to your memory?"

Eleven shook his head. "I woke up one day, and it was gone."

Mike sighed. "Wow. I can't imagine losing my memory."

Eleven hit the All Power button, and all the appliances shut off. He rested the remote on top of the TV and crossed the room to stare at the photographs on the fireplace mantle.

Eleven frowned as his fingers rested on a picture of a small girl.

"That's my baby sister, Holly. The older girl is my sister, Nancy, and those are my parents," Mike said, pointing out two adults in a family photo.

Eleven continued to stare at the baby girl. Holly?

"Eleven? Eleven..."

Mike's voice sounded like it was coming through a wall.

"Who is this?" Eleven (that name still didn't seem right, and his voice sounded deeper than it should've been) said, and he found himself staring at a photograph of a young girl. She was a baby with short blonde hair and wide gray eyes. She looked like Holly, except Holly's eyes were blue; that must've been what triggered the strange vision Eleven was having.

"That's me," a girl's voice grumbled.

Eleven looked up and found himself staring at a blonde, tan girl with steely gray eyes. He could tell her mind was running a thousand miles an hour, and she wore an orange shirt. It had some words on it, but they were blurry, as though someone were blotting them out of the vision.

What was causing the vision, and why didn't they/it want Eleven to see what was on the girl's shirt? Why was it important?

"My dad made me get my picture taken," she said. "Made me do it every year. I always hated it."

"But you were such a cute baby, Annabeth. You're still cute," a raven haired boy came into the picture wearing the same shirt, and he wrapped an arm around the girl, kissing her on the cheek. He glanced at Eleven, and Eleven stared into his sea green eyes.

The girl laughed. "You know it, Seaweed Brain."

Gray eyes. Green eyes. Annabeth. Seaweed Brain.

Four pieces of the same puzzle and they didn't quite fit together.

He was missing several crucial parts, but how was he going to gather all the missing pieces?

"Eleven?"

Eleven was snapped out of the vision by Mike, who was gazing at him in worry.

"What's wrong?" Mike asked.

Eleven stared at the picture of Holly.

"Memories," he replied.

Mike smiled. "Your memory's coming back?"

Eleven shrugged. "Someone of them. Little at a time."

Mike nodded. "That's good."

"Good," Eleven repeated. "Good."

Half an hour later, Mike was playing with some board game pieces in his bedroom, introducing each of the pieces to Eleven and making strange sounds with his mouth, though. Eleven didn't mind; most people would think it was irritating, but Eleven would take annoying sounds over the silence that usually rang through the lab.

Eleven wandered over to the table against the wall beside the door and stared at the series of trophies.

"These are all my science fair trophies," Mike explained, joining him beside the table.

"Science," Eleven reiterated. Something told him he really liked science.

"Yeah. We got first every year, except last year when we got third. Mr. Clark said it was totally political."

Eleven had stopped listening. His eyes were focused on the picture leaning against the trophies.

Will Byers.

Eleven had had a dream about him the night before he escaped the lab. Not only that, but Eleven knew most of what was in the Upside Down. He was connected to it, and while he didn't know everything, he knew more than he wanted to. That's how he knew that Will Byers was in the Upside Down, and judging by how strong The Sense (what Eleven called the power to sense the things in the Upside Down), he was alive.

Eleven lifted a shaking fingers and prodded the photograph, his fingers lightly tapping against the part of the photo that contained Will.

"You know Will?" Mike murmured.

Eleven gave a small nod.

"Did you see him that night? On the road?"

Before Eleven could respond, he heard a car rumble into the driveway, and Mike's eyes widened.

"We have to go!" he exclaimed, grabbing Eleven's wrist and leading him downstairs.

Eleven and Mike skidded to a halt where the stair way curved into a platform, and Eleven saw a curly haired woman and a baby (he recognized them as Mike's mother and sister from the photos on the fireplace mantle).

Mike bounded back up the stairs, dragging Eleven with him.

"Ted?" his mother called. "Is that you?"

"Just me, Mom!" Mike called back.

"Mike? What are you doing home?"

"One second!"

Mike slammed the door to his bedroom and opened another door, displaying a small, claustrophobic closet.

Eleven stared at it in fear.

"Please," Mike begged. "You have to get in, or my mom- she'll find you. I won't tell her about you. I promise."

"Promise?" Eleven muttered. He recognized the word, and it felt like it meant something to him, but he couldn't figure out what.

"It means something that you can't break," Mike explained. "Please get in."

Eleven took two shaky steps forward, and his eyes widened when Mike shut the door.

Eleven felt the flashback crash over him, and he leaned against the wall, sinking to the floor.

Eleven expected a flashback of the awful Room in the lab, but he got something entirely different.

He found himself standing in a small room. There were two doors, both of which were shut and by the looks of them, locked, and no windows. This room was bigger than the dreaded room in the lab, but Eleven was still trapped.

(The italicized section is mostly taken from *The Lost Hero* with a few added things. I gave credit to Rick Riordan for the majority of the passage)

"Mom?" Eleven called, his voice smaller and younger-sounding. His heart was pounding. Something heavy crashed inside the room on the other side of a huge metal door. Unable to control or comprehend his actions entirely, he ran to the door and tried to get it open, but no matter how hard he pulled or kicked, it wouldn't open. "Mom!" Frantically, he tapped a message on the wall. Eleven remembered the scientists using it in the lights in the lab. What did they call it? Morse code? But Eleven didn't know he knew it himself. Still, he understood the message he tapped:

You okay?

"She can't hear you," a voice said.

Eleven turned and found himself facing a strange woman. She was wrapped in black robes, with a veil covering her face.

"Tía?" he said.

Eleven didn't know he knew Spanish either, but he understood that word as well. Aunt.

The woman chuckled, a slow gentle sound, as if she were half asleep. "I am not your guardian. Merely a family resemblance."

"What—what do you want? Where's my mom?"

"Ah ... loyal to your mother. How nice. But you see, I have children too ... and I understand you will fight them someday. When they try to wake me, you will prevent them. I cannot allow that."

"I don't know you. I don't want to fight anybody."

Eleven still didn't want to fight anybody. He'd been fighting since he entered the lab, but judging from the sound of his voice, he'd become a fighter long before he entered Hawkins lab. He didn't sound older than seven or eight.

She muttered like a sleepwalker in a trance, "A wise choice."

With a chill, Eleven realized the woman was, in fact, asleep. Behind the veil, her eyes were closed. But even stranger: her clothes were not made of cloth. They were made of earth—dry black dirt, churning and shifting around her. Her pale, sleeping face was barely visible behind a curtain of dust, and he had the horrible sense that she'd had just risen from the grave. If the woman was asleep, Eleven wanted her to stay that way. He knew that fully awake, she would be even more terrible.

"I cannot destroy you yet," the woman murmured. "The Fates will not allow it. But they not do protect your mother, and they cannot stop me from breaking your spirit. Remember this night, little hero, when they ask you to oppose me."

"Leave my mother alone!" Fear rose in his throat as the woman shuffled forward. She moved more like an avalanche than a person, a dark wall of earth shifting toward him.

"How will you stop me?" she whispered.

She walked straight through a table, the particles of her body reassembling on the other side.

She loomed over Eleven, and he knew she would pass right through him, too. He was the only thing between her and his mother. He didn't remember his mother and he barely even recognized the word, but that didn't mean he didn't know he loved her and would want to protect her.

His hands caught fire.

Eleven was shocked. He'd melted cans and people with his mind before, but his hands had never actually lit on fire. It astounded him.

A sleepy smile spread across the woman's face, as if she'd already

won. Eleven screamed with desperation. His vision turned red. Flames washed over the earthen woman, the walls, the locked doors.

The world went black.

Eleven opened his eyes to find a concerned Mike staring back from the open door.

"Mike," he murmured, relieved for the light that fell over him. It also allowed his tears to glimmer upon his face, and Eleven wanted to reach up and wipe them away, but coming out of a flashback always left him disoriented.

"You okay?" Mike asked, even though he knew Eleven wasn't.

Eleven wasn't sure. He'd had a very frightening flashback, and he was confused by it, but he'd retrieved one of his memories. One day, and two of his lost memories had returned. That had to mean he was getting better.

Eleven nodded. "Promise."

Mike's friends stared at Eleven like he was going to explode.

"Are you out of your mind?" the dark skinned boy (Lucas, right? Eleven thought) said.

"Hear me out," Mike began.

"You're out of your mind!" Lucas exclaimed.

"He knows about Will!" Mike interrupted.

"What about Will?" the curly haired kid, Dustin, demanded.

"He pointed at him," Mike said, showing them the photograph. "I think he knows what happened to him."

Dustin seemed convinced and interested, and Lucas still appeared suspicious of Eleven, but Mike had both of their attentions.

"Do you think it's a coincidence that we found him on Merkwod?" Mike asked. "The same place Will disappeared. And he said bad people are after him. I think these bad people are the same people that took Will."

"Then why doesn't he just tell us?" Lucas demanded, storming over to stand in front of Eleven. "Do you know where he is? Do you know where he is?" Lucas repeated, shaking Eleven's arms.

"Danger," Eleven replied.

"He's in danger?" Lucas interperated.

"You are, too, if you go to find him," Eleven added (this is where his speech begins to improve, and he starts speaking in complete sentences) .

"He can speak," Dustin muttered in the background, but Lucas was only focused on the topic at hand.

"I don't care! Tell me where he is!" Lucas demanded.

"Man, I nearly get myself killed on a daily basis. That's why I'm hiding here, and I don't want to drag you three into my mess by telling you where Will is," Eleven said.

"Last night, he barely talks. Now, he can speak like a normal person," Dustin muttered, and Mike elbowed him with a pointed stare.

"He's probably just pulling our leg!" Lucas snapped. "Back to plan A. We need to tell your mom."

Eleven felt panic fuel him. He wasn't sure if he could trust Mike or Dustin yet, but he knew that he couldn't trust adults. They see a lost child, they call it in, even if the child ran away and ran away for a good reason. Eleven couldn't take that chance. Not only would Papa and the Bad Men possibly kill him, but they'd kill anyone that knew about him. Mike, Mike's mom, Dustin, Lucas... they'd all die.

Eleven wasn't going to let that happen.

Lucas stomped towards the door, but when his hand touched the

doorknob, he snapped back with a yelp. A shiny burn marred his finger tip where he'd come in contact with the metal, and the doorknob was steaming.

"It's got to be a hundred degrees or more," Lucas muttered with a glance at a bewildered and frightened Mike. His eyes moved onto a stunned Dustin before traveling over Dustin's shoulder to land on Eleven. Mike and Dustin followed his gaze.

Blood dripping from his nose and steam rising from his hair, Eleven sent them a stern glance.

"Unless you want to get killed by the Bad People, you step away from the door, sit down, and listen to me," Eleven said.

Too afraid to argue, the three boys seated themselves in various parts of the room. Lucas sat in Mike's desk chair, the farthest away from Eleven, and Dustin reclined in another chair. Mike was the only one not afraid to sit beside Eleven.

With a deep breath, Eleven began his tale.

"A few months ago, I woke up in a lab," Eleven began. "I was told my name was Eleven and that I had... extraordinary powers. I had no memory of my life before the lab, not my real name, not my age, not where I came from or how I came to the lab. I'd never even looked at myself in the mirror until last night.

"The people were... bad. I won't go into detail, but they're bad. They want me back in their lab, and they will kill anyone who knows about me. All three of you; Mike's family is a possibly, too. You have no reason to trust me, and I have no reason to trust you, but you can't tell anyone. You'll die if you do and then you'll never find Will."

"Should we take the chance?" Dustin muttered to Lucas.

Lucas shrugged. "No," he said, shortly. "These powers... what are they?"

Eleven blinked. "I don't know what all of them are, but I know a few. Telekinesis, melting things with my mind, heating things up with my mind, inability to be burned or feel heat, and other abilities I haven't

discovered yet. The person who discovered my powers said that there were some unlocked powers and others that would develop over time. I figured this one out earlier."

Eleven held out his hand and allowed flames to flicker between his fingers, dancing over his palm.

"Woah," Lucas murmured. "If you have these powers, why can't you just fight the Bad People?"

"Too many of them," Eleven said, "and my powers drain me. Using my powers can range from feeling like... a simple gym class to feeling like I ran three consecutive marathons."

Dustin raised an eyebrow. "Wow. No wonder you don't use them often."

Eleven nodded. "Tell no one, and I will find a way to help you find your friend. In a way that doesn't get us all killed. I don't know about you, but I don't like being dead."

"I'm down with that plan," Mike stated.

"I like not being killed," Dustin offered.

Lucas nodded, but he said nothing.

Eleven nodded, "Okay, then."

Curiosity killed the cat.

A few hours later, after the boys had vanished from the room and gone downstairs, Eleven tip toed down the steps and toward the basement.

Milk splattered across the table as Mike performed an award winning spit take, and Dustin banged his fists on the table.

"Sorry," Dustin said, sheepishly. "Spasm."

As soon as Eleven sat in his little blanket fort downstairs, he burst out

laughing.

The spit take... spasm... hilarious.

In the lab, Eleven had never laughed or told a joke or even thought of something funny. He was on his toes everyday, and nothing seemed funny when you were that traumatized. Why was this sense of humor showing up now?

Eleven wondered if he had a sense of humor before the lab tried to take it away...

Eleven was fiddling with the walkie talkie when Mike and his friends appeared in the basement with a plate.

"My mom didn't really feel like cooking tonight, so she just heated up some frozen tacos," Mike said.

Tacos? Eleven took a bite, and he decided, once and for all, that tacos were the best food ever.

"I guess he likes them," Dustin said with a laugh.

Mike smiled before it dropped. "So... Will?"

Eleven contemplated how he was going to voice this.

"I know where he is, but it's going to be hard to get there and get out safely," Eleven said. "I think I can find a way to contact Will, but it may take some time."

As he said this, Eleven twisted a few more knobs on the walkie talkie.

"How can you contact him?" Lucas asked.

"With this," Eleven answered, displaying the Super Com. "But I need to find the right station."

"There's only twenty. It can't be that hard," Lucas said, his eyes suspicious and angry.

Mike elbowed his knee from where he was sitting across from Eleven, and Lucas glared as he rubbed at the offended spot on his leg.

"There's more than twenty stations. You just don't know they're there. You need someone with powers like mine to tap into the unseen stations," Eleven explained. "There's dozens of stations between eleven and twelve for example, and the same goes with the gap between every other set of numbers. It takes a lot of time and energy to sift through every station."

"So... are you trying to contact the lab?" Lucas asked.

Eleven thought about that.

"Somewhat," he settled on. "Will is in a complicated place, and... I don't know how to explain it right now. All I know is that we need to work fast, and we need to contact Will before anything else. Once we get where Will is, the better pin point we have on his location, the safer the mission or whatever it is will be."

Lucas nodded. "Just... please hurry. He's our friend. I don't know what we'd do if something happened to him."

Eleven frowned. "What is friend?"

The word sounded so familiar and yet so... unfamiliar. Like everything else, a distant memory just out of reach,

"Is he serious?" Lucas muttered.

"A friend is someone you do anything for," Mike offered.

"They lend you their cool stuff, like comic books," Dustin added.

"And they never break a promise," Mike said.

"Especially when they're spit," Lucas said.

"Spit?" Eleven reiterated.

Lucas nodded before spitting in his hand and claspng Dustin's.

"It's a vow," Lucas added while Dustin wiped his hand on his shirt with a disgusted expression.

"Will's our friend," Mike concluded.

Eleven smiled. Eleven wasn't one to make promises willy nilly, but he could keep this one.

"We'll bring Will home. I promise."

About half an hour later, Eleven figured out how to explain the Upside Down.

While the boys conversed in quite tones (probably about him), Eleven walked across the room and sat at a card table with a board game on top. He recognized it, although he never remembered playing or seeing it, as Dungeons and Dragons (I'm pretty sure that's what the game was. Feel free to correct me if I'm wrong).

"What's the freak doing?" Lucas hissed.

"Don't call him a freak," Mike snapped.

"It's true."

Eleven sat at the table and closed his eyes.

"Mom... Mom... Mom..."

A small boy with brown hair shivering in his closet at home, crying quietly.

"Mom... Mom... Mom..."

"Will," Eleven said as he opened his eyes and picked up a small wizard figurine.

"Superpowers," Dustin murmured, and Lucas rolled his eyes.

"Where is he?" Mike asked.

Eleven rested the figurine on the table itself and swept all the other

figurines off of the board game. He flipped it over and stared at the empty blackness on the bottom.

He slammed Will's figurine on the black surface.

"I don't understand," Mike said.

"Hiding," Eleven offered, although he didn't elaborate. He didn't want to remember the expression on Will's face as he trembled alone in a dark closet while a monster lurked on the other side of the door.

"He's hiding? From the Bad Men?" Mike inferred.

Eleven shook his head.

"Then from who?"

Eleven reached into the box of figurines, and his hand immediately closed on the two headed serpent beast of the game. The Demigorgan.

He slammed it down on the board right beside Will.

Lucas stared in confusion and mourning fear. Mike gazed in horror, and Dustin's face turned pale with absolute horror as Eleven's intended explanation became more clear. Will was hiding from...

"The ultimate monster," Eleven whispered.

Now the story's really kicking off...

Make sure to review!

By the way, I'm hoping that I'll end up updating more often because I already have this story planned out in stranger things season 2 style but I have to write the story through season 1 first.

Thanks for reading!

4. Not Will

This chapter is significantly shorter than chapter 3, but next chapter will hopefully be longer (I need to rewatch the episode, so I'm not entirely sure, but I'm pretty sure it will be longer.

This story is kind of a round about story. Something happens that makes it seem like the entire story has been changed, and then something else happens that puts them back at square one. Just a fair warning on that.

Also, I did get a reviewer asking about Leo's friendship with Mike. I decided on having him have a strong bond with Mike because I didn't see him and Dustin having a strong bond. Lucas was entirely out of the question, due to his suspicious attitude and dislike of Leo. I thought Leo would be good friends with Will, but since Will is currently unavailable, Mike was the most likely option.

Disclaimer: I own nothing

"Do you really think the weirdo knows where Will is?" Lucas asked Mike.

It was the following day, and Eleven was fiddling with the super con. He felt like he was so close to finding the right station, but every time he thought he got it right, he was wrong. Eleven knew it would be a lot of work, but he honestly thought he'd be able to figure it out within a few hours. He'd been working on it for maybe five hours total, trying to find the right station, and he wasn't getting any closer.

Mike nodded. "I think he does. We just tell our parents we have AV club after school. That should give us at least a few hours for Operation Merkwod."

"I have supplies," Lucas added as he rifled through his backpack. "Binoculars from 'Nam. Army knife, also from 'Nam. Hammer, camouflage bandana. And the wrist rocket," he finished, flourishing a sling shot with yellow bands.

Wow. So impressive, Eleven thought, sarcastically. He didn't say that

aloud, though. He was already on thin ice with Lucas.

Eleven didn't know why Lucas hated him so much. Sure, he was a stranger, and Lucas seemed kind of suspicious, but Lucas seemed to hate him with a burning passion. And for the life of him, Eleven couldn't figure out why.

"You will always be the outsider, the seventh wheel. You will not find a place among your brethren."

Eleven jumped.

What on earth was that?

Eleven glanced around and saw no one except for Lucas, Mike, and Dustin, who didn't seem to have heard anything.

"You're going to take out the Demigorgan with a sling shot?" Dustin asked.

"First of all, it's a wrist rocket," Lucas corrected.

"Call it what you want, it's still a sling shot," Eleven called.

"No one asked you," Lucas snapped. Mike looked like he was about to defend Eleven, but Lucas cut him off. "Second of all, the Demigorgan isn't real, but if there is something out there, I'm going to shoot it in the eye and blind it," Lucas said, snapping the bands of the sling shot-sorry, *wrist rocket*- and causing Dustin to jump.

"What if it doesn't have eyes?" Eleven asked.

"Does it?" Lucas asked.

Eleven shrugged. "I honestly don't know."

"Have you seen it before?" Lucas asked, suspiciously. "Do you even know what it is?"

Eleven sighed. "I can't tell you everything. It's for your own good. I've only seen it once, and I... I don't know what it is."

With that vague statement, Eleven turned back to the walkie talkie while Mike turned to Dustin.

"What did you bring, Dustin?" Mike asked.

Dustin smiled and turned his bag upside down, dumping the contents on the card table.

"Nutty bars, Pringles, smartees, apple, banana, and trail mix," he answered, smiling and revealing his baby teeth.

Mike and Lucas stared at him.

"We need energy for our travels," he pointed out. "For stamina. Besides, why do we even need weapons? We have him."

"He heated up a doorknob!"

"With his mind, and he conjured fire from no where. Does no one else think that's awesome? Imagine what else he can do. He said he had other powers."

"I'm not convinced- Ahh!" Lucas yelped as a soda can sitting on the card table melted into a puddle of gray and red paint.

"Are you convinced now?" Mike asked.

Eleven raised an eyebrow, and Lucas nodded.

Eleven wasn't sure why he felt the need to prove himself to Lucas. Lucas disliked him for some reason, so Eleven felt like he had to give Lucas a reason to like him. Eleven wondered if he'd always had this desire to prove himself; something told him, he'd always had it.

"Boys, time for school!" Mike's mom called from upstairs, and the boys scrambled to grab their things. Lucas and Dustin ran for the stairs, but Mike knelt in front of Eleven.

"We have to go to school. Stay quiet and don't leave. If you get hungry, eat Dustin's snacks. You know the power lines behind my house?"

Eleven nodded. He'd tried tapping into their power, using the electricity to fuel his powers the night before (power, energy, electricity- it all increased his powers, but the bigger the enhancement, the harder the crash. It was like a sugar high and a sugar crash), but that was beyond what he could currently do. Eleven would need to be closer to get the effect, and he didn't want to risk leaving the house to experiment with his powers.

"Okay, after school, meet us there."

Eleven frowned. "After school?"

School seemed like a familiar term, and it filled Eleven with dread... he wondered why that was.

Mike nodded. "Yeah, 3:15."

"3:15," Eleven repeated.

Eleven knew what time was, but he'd had no concept of time for... well, a long time. There weren't any calendars or clocks in the lab. Time in the lab was restricted to stop watches; people didn't even carry their cell phones into the lab, lest it interfere with the equipment (this story is set in modern day, by the way. Mike, Lucas, Dustin, and Will don't have cell phones because their parents don't let them have one, so they use walkie talkies).

"Here," Mike said, handing Eleven his watch. "When the numbers read three, one, five, meet us at the power lines."

"Three, one, five," Eleven repeated with a small smile (repeating things helped him remember them).

Mike nodded and ran for the stairs.

Eleven stared after him for a moment before turning back to the walkie talkie.

He could tell how loyal Mike was to his friends, and he'd only known him for a few days. He could also tell that Mike would be lost without Lucas, Dustin, and Will.

Eleven was going to find a way to bring Will Byers home if it was the last thing he ever did.

Little did he know, it actually might be the last thing he ever did.

Eleven knew it was a bad idea. Mike had been very clear when he told Eleven not to leave the basement, but Eleven was very curious. Maybe a little *too* curious.

Eleven wandered the halls of Mike's home. He sat in the Lazy Boy in the living room and spent half an hour dismantling and reconstructing the land line on the table beside him. When he got bored of doing that, he started dialling random numbers (because why not?)

He dialed 800-009-0009 and listened to the ring.

"This is Camp Half Bl-"

Eleven quickly hung up at the answering machine, and he set the phone down and approached the television.

He hit the power button and watched the screen flicker to life. He turned the channel from one to the next until he stopped on one in particular.

"What are we going to do, Aquaman?" one of the characters asked.

Aquaman. A flashback crashed over him.

"Seriously, Aquaman?" Eleven was saying. "You just had to make the plumbing explode!"

"We were being attacked!" the green eyed boy Eleven had seen in an earlier vision pointed out.

"We're in the middle of the ocean, but you had to use the plumbing instead of the water that's all around us?"

The green eyed boy blushed as he noticed Eleven's point.

"Whoops," he muttered.

Eleven blinked and gazed around the room like a recently awakened sleep walker.

Eleven hurriedly turned off the TV and walked up the stairs, the carpet warm under his bare feet.

He immediately headed for Mike's room. He passed a girl's (by the size of the bed, his older sister's) before entering his friend's bedroom.

He strolled through the doorway and glanced around, wanting something to do until his watch read three, one, five.

His eyes were attracted to the desk, which was covered with wires and small machine parts. Mike had obviously been building something there. Maybe a science fair project? Or maybe something for his... AV club? Yeah, that sounded right.

Eleven hadn't expected a flashback so soon after the previous one, and it really threw him for a loop.

"Connect the red wire to the blue wire," Eleven was saying, leaning over a small boy as he guided the child's hands. The wires connected and created a small spark. The boy closed a small hatch, hiding the wires from view, and a mechanical bird fluttered its metal wings before rising off the table.

"Yes!" the boy shouted. "My first big project! Thank you!"

Eleven grinned. "I just helped. It was your design. Good job, Harley."

The boy tackled him in a hug, and Eleven returned it.

Harley.

Eleven blinked as he came out of the flashback, and he found himself on the floor with a nose bleed. He didn't know the flashbacks could cause nose bleeds, but maybe two so close together put an extreme amount of strain on his mind and powers.

Eleven glanced at Mike's watch.

Three. One. Five. It was time to go.

Eleven wandered down to the power lines, and he stopped short when there was a sudden hiss.

A cat.

Eleven had been waiting for a flashback to the lab, and finally, it arrived.

It was right before he killed the people who tried to put him in The Room.

They wanted him to kill the cat with his powers. Eleven didn't exactly know how they wanted him to kill the animal, but as long as he used his powers, they didn't care. That meant burning the cat, setting it on fire, causing flames to lick its insides... every scenario was more horrible than the last.

At first, Eleven tried. He was scared of Papa and The Men. He had the burning desire to do what they said.

But the cat began hissing and meowing in pain as Eleven's powers began to increase its body heat to unbearable temperatures. If Eleven pushed any farther, a fire was inevitable.

Eleven couldn't do it. The cat was in so much pain, and the cat had never done anything to him. He refused to hurt an innocent animal. Or person, for that matter, and he was pretty sure Papa would eventually make him do that.

Eleven ripped the suction cups from his forehead and shook his head at Papa.

That was why he killed The Men. Eleven had pushed his powers, and then, he'd never given in and used them. It was like tipping on the back legs of your chair and barely stopping yourself from falling. If you don't check yourself, falling cannot be avoided. That's how Eleven's powers worked. Eleven pushed his powers until he was on the brink of using them, and he

hadn't had time to cool himself down, to get his powers back in check, before his emotions spiraled out of control when he was taken to The Room. His powers were linked to his emotions, and the months of pent up fear and rage and betrayal poured out of him, triggering his powers.

He killed two men. The fact that they had done bad things to him didn't help Eleven when he tried to justify the murder he committed.

"Evan!"

Eleven turned and saw Mike and his two friends walking towards him with their bikes.

"You okay?" Mike asked.

Eleven nodded, even though he wanted to say no. Saying no would mean he'd have to answer a lot of difficult questions, so he said yes.

Mike nodded. "Hop on," he said, patting the seat of his bike. "We only have a few hours."

Eleven hopped on behind Mike, and the four boys were off.

"Mike," Eleven said as they were walking through the woods, and he gestured to Mike's chin. He hadn't noticed it before, but there was a large cut on the boy's chin.

"Oh, I... fell... at recess."

Eleven raised an eyebrow. "Don't lie to me."

Mike sighed. "I got pushed by this mouth breather Troy. I don't know why I didn't just tell you. Half the town knows I get pushed around by Troy."

"Mike," Eleven said, slowly. "I understand."

And he did. He understood the humiliation of being pushed around, the confusion as to why this was happening to him when he had done nothing wrong. He knew the hurt and betrayal and anger that

whirled inside of him when someone hurt him- physically or mentally- and he was unable or unwilling to strike back.

Somehow, Eleven knew he had known and understood this emotional ache long before he entered the lab.

Now if only he could figure out what had happened, where he'd been, and *who* he'd been before he entered that awful lab.

It was getting dark when Eleven finally stopped in his tracks.

He stared at the house before him, the pull in his chest easing.

Will.

"Will," Eleven voiced.

"This is where he lives," Mike said.

"Hiding," Eleven spoke, the energy of tracking Will with his powers rendering him almost speechless.

"No, this is where he lives," Mike repeated.

"What are we doing here?" Lucas demanded.

"He says Will is hiding here," Mike stated.

"I swear if we walked all the way out here for nothing..." Dustin exclaimed.

"Right here."

Eleven froze and looked around.

Will. He'd heard him. That meant he was here. Now how could he prove it to the other boys?

"That's exactly what we did! He doesn't know what he's talking about!" Lucas was saying when Eleven returned to the here and now.

"Guys!" Dustin yelled, and they followed his gaze to see multiple

police cars, Fire trucks, and an ambulance racing towards the same location.

"Will," Mike murmured in horror.

Can't be, Eleven thought, but he got on Mike's bike and rode with them, following the sirens.

They arrived at a quarry and ducked behind a fire truck to watch.

Two men were lifting a boy out of the water and onto an orange raft/boat thing.

"It can't be Will," Mike whispered.

"It's Will," Lucas confirmed as the boy floated closer to the shore on the raft.

Mike began to walk towards his bike, and Eleven reached for his arm.

"Mike-

Mike slapped his hand away. "*Mike?* You were supposed to help us find him *alive*! What is wrong with you? What is *wrong* with you?"

"What is wrong with you? Murderer! Diablo!"

Eleven blinked, trying to drown out the distant memory of similar words, as he watched Mike mount his bike and begin to pedal away.

"Mike, don't do this man!" Lucas called, tears dripping down his face.

"Mike!" Dustin yelled, but Mike had already vanished into the distance.

"Not Will," Eleven mumbled, but Dustin and Lucas were too distraught to hear him.

He knew the boy wasn't Will. Now, how could he prove that to Mike, Dustin, and Lucas?

He had an idea.

Okay, I'm curious. For those of you that have seen these shows/read the book, which do you like the best?

1. Gravity Falls
2. Stuck In the Middle
3. Lab Rats, 2012
4. Harry Potter

I have story ideas for all of these and once I update some other stories of mine, I'll be writing one of them, so which show/book do you like the best out of those four?

Thanks for reading the latest chapter of Control! See you next time!

5. Repair Boy

I am SO sorry about the long wait.

This chapter is a little longer than chapter 4. I wanted it to be longer, but oh, well. I can't wait to get to season 2! That's where most of the action will be.

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

"Would you please stop that?" Mike asked, almost growling the sentence.

Eleven swallowed as he fiddled with the dials on the walkie talkie. The crackles and static were the only sounds present in the room.

Eleven looked away from Mike, not wanting to meet his eyes.

"Are you deaf?" Mike demanded.

Eleven felt as though a knife had been thrust into his chest with Mike's angry tone. Lucas already hated him. Eleven didn't know what he'd do if Mike started to hate him, too, and he certainly wouldn't know what to do if Mike kicked him out, which Eleven was just waiting for that to happen.

"I thought we were friends," Mike continued. "Friends tell each other the truth. They don't lie to each other. You made me believe that Will was out there, that he was alive! And he wasn't!"

Eleven flinched as a headache came on, and he felt a trickle of blood begin to seep out of his nose, but despite the pain and the nose bleed and the exhaustion, he managed to smile. It worked. Now, if he just pushed himself a little more, he could prove to Mike that Will was still alive.

"Why did you lie to me?" Mike demanded, and he actually sounded close to crying.

A soft click sounded, and the crackle and static of the walkie talkie

became words. Words spoken by a voice that was all familiar to Mike. A voice he thought he'd never hear again.

"Should I stay or should I go?" Will's weak voice filtered over the radio.

Mike froze.

"Should I stay or should I go now?" Will sang.

Mike crossed the room and knelt by Eleven's side to hear better.

"If I go, there will be trouble," Will rasped. He obviously hadn't had much to drink since he'd disappeared. "If I stay, there will be double."

Eleven handed Mike the walkie talkie, and Mike hit one of the buttons.

"Will? Will, it's Mike! Do you copy?" Mike asked, his words rushed and almost blurring together.

A crackle sounded as the radio fuzzed in and out, but Will's voice didn't return.

"Was that..." Mike murmured, unable to complete the sentence.

Eleven managed a small smile.

"Will," Eleven confirmed.

A weak whimper sounded over the radio, followed by the crackle of static, as Eleven twisted the knobs and pressed the buttons, reaching out with his powers. He could feel Will... just out of his reach, but every time he thought his powers would just barely brush against the boy, he was yanked back by something. It took a lot of power to reach out that far, and the crummy radio signal wasn't helping. With the right equipment, Eleven could make it stronger, but that would take time, and time was something they didn't have.

"Did you hear that?" Mike asked Lucas and Dustin.

"Yeah," Lucas replied. "I heard a baby."

"What?" Mike asked.

"Mike, you obviously tapped into a baby monitor. It's probably the people next door," Lucas pointed out.

"No, Lucas. You don't understand. He spoke last night. Words!" Mike exclaimed. "He was singing that weird song he loves. Even Evan heard him!"

The radio crackled and crinkled and buzzed in Eleven's hands.

"Well, if the weirdo heard him, it must be true," Lucas muttered, sarcastically.

"Are you sure you have the right channel?" Dustin asked. The boy was skeptical, but he was also hopeful.

"I don't think that matters," Mike suggested. "I think... somehow... *he's channeling Will.*"

"Are you actually believing this?" Lucas asked Dustin.

"Well..." Dustin began. "Remember when Will fell off his bike and broke his finger?"

Lucas nodded in confusion, not understanding what that had to do with anything.

"He sounded a lot like that," Dustin remembered.

The radio buzzed louder before quieting down, and Eleven sighed in exhaustion. His powers weren't nearly strong enough to reach out to Will with this signal. He knew that, but he had to keep trying.

Luckily for him, Mike also saw his dilemma.

"This isn't going to work," he realized. "We need to get Evan to a stronger radio signal."

"Like the radio Mr. Clarke has!" Dustin suggested.

Mike nodded.

"But there's that assembly," Lucas pointed out. "Somebody is bound to notice the weirdo! Especially with the scar and the long hair."

"Well, that's easily fixed," Mike responded. "Dustin, go into my dad's office and get me a pair of scissors. Lucas, go into my room and get Evan a change of clothes. Meet me in Nancy's room."

The two of them hurried off to do as Mike told them, and Mike led Eleven up the stairs and into his sister's room.

"First step," he explained as they sat on the window seat, and Mike rested a small, pink box between them, "hiding that scar."

Mike lightly brushed a make up brush over Eleven's skin, covering the thick white tissue of the scar with some concealer. By the time he finished, Dustin and Lucas had arrived, and Mike accepted the scissors from Dustin, motioning for Eleven to face away from him.

Eleven heard the small snips as Mike cut his curls to a shorter length before the three boys left Eleven to get changed.

Eleven did so, and when he exited the room, he found the three boys waiting for him, and they stared at him in surprise.

"He looks... almost normal," Lucas murmured.

"He looks great!" Mike exclaimed.

Eleven glanced at his reflection in a nearby mirror, and his eyes widened.

He was wearing a white T-shirt- with no designs or writing or anything- with a pair of blue jeans, and Lucas had given him an army jacket to complete the look. His curls were still unruly, but now they only touched his chin instead of his shoulders. The scar had vanished under a few layers of concealer, and Lucas had given him sneakers.

The new look... it looked so familiar, but Eleven couldn't quite place where he'd seen it before. Then again, he couldn't really place anything, considering his memory was in shambles, if some

fragments even remained at all.

"What do you think?" Mike asked.

Eleven swallowed.

"Familiar," he responded, much to their confusion. "But... good familiar."

"Remember: If anyone sees us, look sad," Mike reminded them as they walked into the school. The hallways were empty aside from them.

Mike wrapped his fingers around the door knob and pulled, but it didn't budge.

"It's locked," Mike grumbled.

"What?" Lucas asked, pulling on the doorknob himself.

"Do you think you can open it? With your powers," Dustin asked.

Eleven shook his head. "Haven't learned how to *unlock* doors yet."

The boys sighed in disappointment.

"But I can do it with this," Eleven continued, pulling a Bobby pin out of the pocket of the army jacket he was wearing.

"Where did you get that?" Lucas asked.

"Mike's sister's room. I had a feeling we were going to need it eventually," Eleven explained before inserting the Bobby pin into the lock and beginning to jiggle it around. "Almost got it..."

Right before a click would've sounded as the door unlocked, a person rounded the corner.

"Boys," a man with a mustache said, and Eleven jumped, jamming the Bobby pin back into his pocket. "The assembly's about to start."

"Yeah. We're just... sad," Mike said, plastering a depressed expression on his face.

"About Will," Lucas added. "And we needed some alone time."

"To cry," Dustin added.

"I get it," the man assured them, "but let's just be there for Will, okay? And then after that, the Heathkit is yours for the rest of the day," he said, tossing Mike a key.

His eyes landed on Eleven.

"Oh," he said. "I don't believe we've met. I'm Mr. Clarke. What's your name?"

"Evan," Eleven said, slowly.

"Where are you from?" Mr. Clarke asked. "I can't quite place your accent."

The words were out of Eleven's mouth before he could register them.

"Texas, originally," Eleven answered. "I moved around a lot, though."

Mr. Clarke nodded before the four boys began to follow the teacher.

"You're a quick thinker," Mike complimented in a whisper voice.

"Not quick thinking," Eleven replied. "It's true... I think, anyway."

"So your memory is coming back?" Mike asked.

Eleven nodded, slowly. "In pieces," he added.

Dustin banged open the doors to the auditorium, and heads swiveled around to look at the five people standing in the doorway.

"Abort," Dustin hissed.

"Abort," Eleven agreed, but before either of them could leave, Lucas and Mike pulled them back.

The four boys found seats as the man at the front of the room continued his speech.

"Will was an exceptional student and a wonderful friend to all of us," he announced. "I can't even begin to explain the hole he will leave in our community. I'd like to introduce you to Sandy Sloan."

"Look at these fakers," Mike muttered.

"They probably didn't even know his name until today," Lucas agreed.

The four of them turned their heads as someone chuckled, and Eleven's eyes landed on two boys laughing. Laughing at the death of a young boy.

"Death is no laughing matter," Eleven muttered.

Mike nodded, and while Eleven wasn't particularly good at reading expressions, considering he'd been living with cold and distant scientists for as long as he could remember (which wasn't long), but he read Mike's easily enough.

"Mouth breather," Eleven realized, thinking back on their earlier conversation about the boy that had shoved Mike at recess.

Mike nodded.

Feet pounded against the wooden bleachers as the students climbed down onto the floor of the auditorium after the assembly was finished.

"Hey! Hey! Hey, Troy!" Mike yelled, and Troy and his buddy stopped at the sound of his name. "You think this is funny? I saw you two laughing, and I think that's a really messed up thing to do."

All of the other students stopped in their tracks as Mike and Troy glared at each other.

"You heard the principal," Troy said. "Grief shows itself in *funny* ways."

"Death is no laughing matter," Eleven growled.

"Ooh, the newbie is *feisty*," Troy mocked. "But hey, it's okay! Will is

happy now. He's in fairyland, where everyone is so happy and gay!"

Troy turned his back, and Mike, in a burst of uncharacteristic anger, lunged and shoved Troy, causing the boy to stumble.

"Oh, it's on, Wheeler!" Troy declared before raising his fist and racing towards Mike.

Eleven didn't think. He just acted.

Seeing his friend in danger caused the instinct to step in front of Mike to rear up within Eleven, and the boy jumped in front of Mike. His hand wrapped around Troy's before he could tell it to do so, and he judo flipped Troy, causing the boy to cry out as he hit the gym floor.

"Leave my friends alone," Eleven murmured, getting in Troy's face, before he straightened up and led an astonished Mike away.

"How did he do that?" Lucas whispered in awe as they walked out of the auditorium.

"I don't know, but it was awesome!" Dustin exclaimed, quietly.

"Come on," Mike instructed as he led Eleven into a small room filled with radios of various shapes and sizes.

"What now?" Lucas asked.

"He'll find him," Mike replied. "Right, Evan?"

Eleven didn't respond as he sat in front of the radios and began to twiddle with the knobs and buttons until he had them in the right positions. Then, he closed his eyes and reached out with his powers.

It wasn't long before he felt himself slipping into another flashback.

"Eleven, are you listening?" Papa asked as he rested a glass of water in front of him.

Eleven nodded.

"Good," Papa replied as he sat beside the small boy. He pushed a photograph towards Eleven, and Eleven examined the middle aged man in the photograph. "I need you to find this man and repeat his words back to me. Can you do that?"

Eleven swallowed and reached out with his mind and his powers, but it wasn't long before he found himself somewhere. Somewhere outside of the lab.

He was standing in a room covered with vines and filled with games, like in an arcade. There was a sofa and a leopard above the mantel of the fireplace. Eleven jumped when it smacked its jaws. The thing was *alive*.

"We can't just give up!"

Eleven turned and saw a dark haired, pale boy facing a blonde kid. They were both so familiar, but Eleven couldn't remember his actual name, much less who these kids were.

"Nico," the blonde boy sighed, "I know you hope that he is still alive-"

"He *is*. He's not in the Underworld. How do you explain that, Jason?" the dark haired boy asked.

"I don't know."

Back at the lab, Dr. Bruner glanced up in shock as the PA crackled.

"I don't know," a male voice filtered through the speakers.

"Who is he listening into?" another scientist asked.

"I have no idea," Dr. Bruner admitted.

"But there is no way he can be alive," the blonde boy continued. "He was involved in a *fiery explosion*. Even *he* couldn't survive that."

"Why can't you accept that there might be a *possibility* that he is alive?"

"Don't you think I want to hope?" the blonde boy yelled. "But I can't

because it hurts too much. It's easier to accept his death and try to move on than hope that he might still be alive and be disappointed."

"Jason-"

"No. He is dead. That is final. Do you understand, Nico? He is *dead*. Le-"

Eleven jolted as his powers hit a road block, and he would've collapsed onto the metal table he was sitting at if Papa hadn't caught him.

Dr. Bruner stared at the speakers.

"Extraordinary," he murmured.

"He's doing it!" Mike exclaimed as the lights abruptly shut off.

"Wow," Dustin whispered.

"Calm down. He just closed his eyes," Lucas pointed out.

The radio began to crackle, and murmurs crossed over the static.

"Do you ever miss him?" a female voice murmured.

"Of course I do," another voice replied- the blonde boy's voice from the flashback.

Eleven reached forward and twisted the knob a little to the left, a little to the right, and farther to the left.

The three boys behind Eleven jumped as a loud yell came over the radio.

"Mom! Mom!"

"Will!" Lucas shouted.

"Will!" a female voice shouted over the radio.

"Will's mom?" Dustin murmured.

A crack sounded, and Eleven could no longer channel Will, but he did end up channeling someone else.

"Nico, this is a wild goose chase," a female voice said.

"Hazel, you felt the same thing I did. He is alive somewhere, and I won't give up until I find him. The others may not believe me, but you have to, Hazel."

"Maybe I do know that, but neither of us even know where to start looking."

"I know, but I found Percy. I can find Repair Boy. I just need to find a good place to start."

"And how are you going to do that?"

"By starting at his roots. After running away from camp when I was ten, I started to reclaim lost memories by looking for my roots. Italy. Wouldn't it make sense if he returned to his roots like I returned to mine. It's like an instinct."

"Well, where are his roots?"

"Where he was born and raised for eight years of his life. Texas."

A loud pop sounded as the radio fizzed out.

"Repair Boy," Eleven repeated before his head dropped onto the table. Blood poured out of his nose and dripped onto some papers beside him.

The three boys cried out in shock. They knew he'd be exhausted after using his powers, but they hadn't expected him to be on the verge of fainting.

Dustin, Mike, and Lucas lifted the scrawny boy onto a cart and rolled him into the hallway.

"Who was that at the end?" Lucas asked as they ran out of the school. "He acted like he knew the people who were talking."

Mike shrugged. "He said his memory was coming back in pieces. Maybe he accidentally tapped into someone from his forgotten past or something."

"Either way," Dustin muttered, "something tells me we'll find out eventually."

Not as good as some of the other chapters, but I didn't think it was bad either.

Nico's looking for Leo... how will this turn out?

I know I cut out some really funny parts. I wanted to add them in, but I also needed to think of what would work best to move the plot line along. I will try to add some humor in. Leo handles serious situations with humor, so as the situations get more dangerous and more serious, I'm hoping to add in some more famous Valdez humor.

See you next time! I hope the wait will be shorter, and I will try to get more chapters up soon because I want to get to season 2 (season 2 starts in chapter 10, I think) as soon as possible.

Thanks for reading! Please leave a review! Goodbye, everyone!

6. What Is Wrong With You?

Hello, everyone! I apologize for the long wait, but I have returned!

Disclaimer: I do not own Percy Jackson/Heroes of Olympus or its characters. I also do not own Stranger Things.

"Maybe we should ask Will's mom," Mike suggested. "We heard her on the radio."

"Oh, yeah? What are we going to tell her?" Lucas questioned. "Hello, Mrs. Byers, we know your son is alive and we know you were talking to him because our super-powered, weirdo somewhat friend, who is apparently on the run from Bad Men, used his powers to channel Will?" he stated, sarcastically.

Dustin shrugged. "He does have a point. Even I would think that sounded weird. Heck, if we weren't there, I wouldn't believe it."

Mike sighed before turning to Evan, who was lying on the couch and trying to avoid drifting off. "Evan, do you know where Will is?"

"Upside Down," Evan answered.

"What is that?" Lucas asked, frustrated with the vague answer.

"It's a bad place," Evan answered.

"But where is it?" Lucas growled, irritated and wanting a straight answer from the weirdo for once.

"Here," Evan replied. "But you can't see it."

"What are you-" Lucas began.

"Another dimension," Dustin realized with a snap of his fingers as the pieces clicked into place.

"What?" Mike asked, bewildered by the seemingly random statement.

"Think about it. We can't see Will, but we can hear him and communicate with him through radios and walkie-talkies, but there's a lot of static, so much you can barely understand him, like Will's voice is traveling over *worlds* and not just miles. And when we asked Eleven where Will was the first time, he flipped the board upside down," Dustin said with a proud smile as he figured it out. "And now, he's telling us that this Upside Down is here, but we can't see it."

"Here but not here at the same time," Mike said as what Dustin was saying finally began to make sense.

"What are you two talking about?" Lucas demanded.

The three boys sat at the card table that held their board game, and Mike began to explain:

"There's a theory that several dimensions exist on the same plane, but you can't see them, and each dimension is different from the others. Well, what if the Upside Down is like Hawkins, but different? Opposite?"

"Upside down," Lucas repeated as he began to see the answers they were seeing.

"Yes," Mike responded before tapping on the board game. "What if this is Hawkins?" Mike flipped the board upside down so that the pitch black underside was facing up. "And this is the Upside Down? Where Will is?"

Lucas turned to Evan. "Do you know how to get to the Upside Down?"

Evan pondered the question before answering with a shake of his head. Technically, he knew how to get there. The Gate. But it was far too dangerous, and as much as Evan wanted to save Will, what was the point if his new friends died the minute they stepped into the Upside Down? Then they'd be losing four lives and not just one. They weren't that desperate. Yet.

Lucas sighed. "Of course, he knows everything about the Upside Down except how to get there!"

"Don't be so hard on him," Mike admonished. "He's helped us a lot. If

it wasn't for him, we would still be *mourning* Will instead of looking for him."

Lucas shrugged. "I guess you're right, but we barely know anything about this place. We don't know how to get there. We don't know how long Will can survive there. We barely know anything. It's like every time we find an answer, another question comes up."

"Trust me," Dustin muttered. "We know."

"And what about those voices we heard at the end?" Mike asked, turning to Evan. "Do you know who they were?"

Evan shook his head. "Heard them before," he stated, "but I don't know who they are."

They said something about Texas, Evan remembered, and he wanted to go there and find that kid and get some answers, but he couldn't leave his friends when the danger was at its worst.

Evan didn't remember much about who he was before the lab, but he knew that he wasn't the type of person that would abandon his friends when they needed him the most.

Eleven lounged on his makeshift bed in Mike's basement; the three boys were currently attending a funeral for Will and intended to ask their science teacher about other dimensions. Eleven wasn't sure how much insight the teacher could offer; after all, Papa barely knew anything about the Upside Down, and he had hundreds of scientific resources at his finger tips.

Eleven was more focused on the voices, the people he'd channeled... Nico and Hazel. Especially Nico.

Eleven could almost see the memory, but it barely brushed his fingertips every time he reached for it. He remembered shaggy black hair and a jacket and a lot of black. By those few things, Eleven thought Nico was probably emo, and it sounded right, but Eleven still couldn't remember anything else about Nico or Hazel or Texas or the other voices or any of it!

Something was blocking his memories, and every time Eleven managed to grab hold of one, his head would threaten to split open with a burning agony.

Eleven rubbed his forehead and eyes, trying to ease the pain and wondering if retrieving his memories was worth the migraine that followed.

Eleven stood and was about to try channeling Will on Mike's radio again when there was a thunderous boom from outside.

Eleven knew he shouldn't have gone outside, but something told him that he had to, so he took small steps towards the door and wrapped his fingers around the doorknob.

What he saw outside Mike's house made his jaw drop.

A monster. A beast ten times the size of Eleven with shaggy black hair and tusks as big as Eleven's whole body. It smelled like rotting meat and was wearing nothing except for a gigantic pair of Fruit Of Looms.

The Minotaur, a small voice in the back of his head supplied, but Eleven wasn't sure how he knew that.

There was no one else around; Eleven was surprised the roar the Minotaur gave didn't draw the whole neighborhood out, but that might have been because, unlike Eleven, these people made the smart decision and stayed away from the frightening sounds of the monster instead of going to see what it was.

Eleven wasn't sure what to do, but he didn't have time to put together a plan as the Minotaur charged right at him.

Eleven's instincts kicked into gear, instincts he didn't even know he had, and he sidestepped, watching as the monster barreled past him and got its tusks stuck an inch deep in the wall of Mike's house.

Eleven held out his hand and watched in shock as a fiery ball the size of his head materialized out of thin air and hit the Minotaur right on its behind.

Eleven stared at his hands in astonishment. He knew he could create fire, but he didn't know he could create such an intense fire, much less throw a ball of fire as easily as he would throw a baseball.

"ROAR!"

Eleven's head jerked up, and he watched as the now free and angry Minotaur stormed towards him.

Eleven fired off another ball of flame, hitting the Minotaur directly in the rib cage; he watched as the monster fell to one knee with a whimper before letting loose another rage filled bellow. The fire could harm it, but the small balls of flame Eleven shot at it wouldn't kill it.

Eleven needed a solution and fast.

Eleven tripped over his heels as the monster charged him again, and he fell on his back while the monster continued to sprint towards him, the earth shaking under its heavy weight.

Instinct took over, and Eleven's arm wrapped around a piece of broken fence before thrusting it into the Minotaur's chest. The monster stumbled back with a yelp, not dead but wounded, and Eleven used the monster's distraction as an opportunity to climb the monster (which was much easier since the monster had fallen to the ground and was now sitting on the grass. It still towered over Eleven but not as much as when it was standing). He stood on the monster's shoulder and stabbed the broken piece of fence into the monster's neck; the small boy watched as the monster dissolved into nothing but golden dust. Eleven hit the ground hard and wound up rolling in the golden dust, which greatly disgusted him, but he was too tired to care as he climbed to his feet on shaky legs.

Eleven wandered back inside, dropping the dust-coated piece of fence in the trashcan outside the back door, and after checking to make sure the house was indeed empty, he took a quick shower to wash the dust away before shaking the golden substance off of his clothes and getting dressed.

Eleven laid down on his makeshift bed, exhausted, and nearly drifted off to sleep, immediately, but one thing kept him awake:

Eleven had expected The Lab to send Bad Men after him. The Bad Men may have guns or other weapons; Eleven wouldn't have been surprised if The Lab sent people like Eleven, people with powers, after him. Eleven was sure there were more test subjects. He was Test Subject Eleven, which meant there had to be at least ten more test subjects. Papa made it seem like there were other people and experiments like Eleven- both successes and failures- but there was something about Eleven that made him different. Special. Eleven had questioned it in the beginning, but after Papa basically told him it was none of his business and to back off (not in those exact words, of course), Eleven had abandoned his curiosity on the subject. Now it was back with full force.

Eleven had expected Bad Men, other test subjects... but monsters? That was the one thing Eleven thought he didn't have to worry about.

Maybe the monster wasn't from The Lab, at all. Maybe it was from the Upside Down. Eleven did feel connected to it in some way, but it wasn't like his connection with the Monster, the one he'd seen in the Upside Down when he'd accidentally opened the Gate. This was different.

Maybe the monster *was* from The Lab. Maybe the monster- *the Minotaur*, his mind remembered- was some kind of experiment the scientists had conducted. Maybe it was a genetically modified animal, but Eleven thought he would've known there was a monster in The Lab. The Lab was big and Eleven hadn't even seen all of it, but it wasn't big enough that Eleven would be able to miss the fact that there was an actual monster within the walls of The Lab.

That hypothesis was plausible, and yet... it didn't feel right.

Eleven's exhaustion outweighed everything on his mind as he slipped into slumber.

He was standing in front of a house. A familiar one with neatly trimmed rose bushes and a beautiful garden and an overall perfect appearance, but the woman that opened the door ruined the perfect image.

Eleven could see some similarities between him and her, such as their skin

tone and their curly brown hair, but that's where the similarities ended. She had a gigantic mole on her cheek, and her face might have been decent looking if it wasn't pulled into an ugly scowl.

"Yes?" she questioned.

"Um, hello, are you Rosa Santiago?"

Eleven turned and found a boy dressed in an aviators jacket, ripped black jeans, and a black T-shirt standing beside him. He was around thirteen with shaggy raven locks and extremely pale skin. His eyes were a deep brown, almost black, and they were the most vulnerable part of his appearance because unlike his dark, tough guy look, his eyes showed his true worry and exhaustion and sadness... but not just any sadness. Grief. And maybe- just maybe- a little bit of hope.

Nico, Eleven realized, recognizing the voice.

"I am," the woman replied.

"My name is Nico, I'm a friend of your nephew's," Nico began.

Rosa visibly stiffened. "I don't have a nephew," she stated, trying to slam the door in his face.

Nico smacked his hand on the door, holding it open, and any politeness vanished from his face, replaced by anger, irritation, and determination.

"Look. Your nephew is missing, presumed dead, but I think he's alive. You may not care about your nephew, but other people do. All I need to know is if you've seen him or heard from him within the past few months," Nico demanded.

Rosa snorted. "I haven't seen or heard from him or about him since he was eight years old. If I never hear from him again, it'll be too soon. And if he is dead... good riddance," she growled before slamming the door with a thunderous boom. Eleven heard picture frames fall off the walls inside.

Nico sighed as he came face to face with a dead end.

"Nico?" Eleven whispered. He knew Nico couldn't see or hear him, but he felt the need to say the name aloud, as if simply saying the name would

bring back his memories. He knew Nico couldn't see or hear him, and that's why he was so surprised when Nico spun around to face him, but he didn't appear to be seeing Eleven. He was looking right through him, but he was looking around, searching for the source of Eleven's voice.

He said something, but it was muted. It looked like a name, a short one, and Eleven vaguely wondered if the word Nico had said had been his name before The Lab.

If only he could have heard the name. Maybe it would help him remember.

But he didn't hear the name. He didn't hear anything else as the dream faded, and Eleven awakened with a jolt of alertness.

Eleven's eyes flew open, and he heard his breathing exit his mouth in stuttering gasps.

Nico was looking for him. Nico knew who he was, where he came from. He knew Eleven's past before The Lab.

As of now, Eleven has more questions than answers, but he has a feeling that the answers he needs lie with Nico.

Eleven jumped as the pencil pierced the paper, punching a hole through the thin material.

Mike had just finished the explanation about the flea and the acrobat, the one Mr. Clarke had given them. About how the acrobat can only go back and forth on a line, but the flea can go back and forth and under it... but to get to another dimension, you'd have to punch a hole in our universe, form a gate.

Eleven thought it was a good analogy, but even if Eleven didn't understand the Upside Down or the concept of other dimensions entirely, he knew it was much more complicated than that. Mr. Clarke was spot on about one thing, though: it would take a lot of energy to open a gate like that, an impossible amount of energy.

Unfortunately, Eleven was quite good at doing the impossible, which

included summoning impossible amounts of energy and opening a gate to a potentially (aw, screw potentially. *Definitely*) dangerous dimension simply because he had impossible (or not so impossible) powers that can be dangerous and helpful and also mean that Eleven had to be a human science experiment and has to constantly run for his life now.

Aren't I lucky? Eleven thought before swallowing a laugh. *Oh, hey look, I've mastered the art of sarcasm. What an accomplishment.*

"Do you know where The Gate is?" Lucas asked Eleven.

Eleven hesitated.

Friends tell the truth. They don't lie to each other. Mike's words echoed in his ears.

But friends also keep each other safe.

Eleven shook his head.

Lucas cursed before glancing up as Dustin began to wildly pace, almost like a caged animal (and trust me, Eleven knows what that feels like).

"What are you doing?" Mike asked, puzzled.

"I need to see your compasses!" he demanded. "All of your compasses! Right now!"

The two other boys dumped all of their compasses onto the card table, and Eleven was mildly surprised by how many compasses they had. Three boys and eight compasses on the table.

"So a compass is supposed to point north, right?" Dustin asked.

His friends nodded.

"Yeah..." Lucas muttered, obviously not knowing where his friend was going with this.

"That's not true north," Dustin stated.

Eleven's eyes widened as he realized what Dustin was getting at, and it took all of his will power not to jump up and melt the compasses before Dustin could continue.

"What are you talking about?" Mike asked.

"Are you two really this dense?" Dustin questioned. "The sun rises in the east and sets in the west," he pointed out before gesturing straight ahead of him, "which means that's true north."

"So the compasses are broken," Mike said.

"Do you even know how a compass works? It doesn't have a battery pack because it doesn't need one; the needle is automatically drawn to the magnetic field of the North Pole. But during class a few weeks ago, Mr. Clarke mentioned that the direction can be changed by a really powerful magnet. And today, he said that the gate would have so much power-

"It would disrupt the electromagnetic field," Mike realized.

Dustin nodded. "Which means that there is a good chance, the gate is that way," he added, pointing in the direction the compass's needles were drawn to.

Eleven had been screwing up their compasses for hours and was growing increasingly tired as they reached a junk yard.

Eleven wiped his nose and jumped as Lucas kicked a sheet of metal.

"We've been wandering around for hours, and we're just going in circles," he growled.

"I don't understand," Dustin mumbled, staring at his compass.

"Maybe the gate moved," Mike suggested.

"I don't think so," Dustin answered. "Maybe there's a stronger magnet nearby. With all the weird stuff going on lately, I wouldn't be surprised."

"It's not a magnet," Lucas murmured, his eyes focused solely on Eleven. "He's been acting weirder than usual ever since we got back from Will's funeral. And his nose is bleeding. He's been using his powers to screw with our compasses!"

"That's not true. Right, Evan?" Mike demanded.

Eleven swallowed. "I'm sorry, Mike, but it isn't safe. The gate... if you went there, you'd die before you could save Will. It's too dangerous."

"Why didn't you just tell us that?" Dustin asked. "We could've found another way."

Eleven didn't answer because honestly... he didn't know. He'd panicked and chosen to lie instead of tell the truth, and he felt awful about it, but protecting his friends mattered more than telling them the truth. If they knew the truth... everything would go wonky, and they'd be in danger. The less they knew, the better, but Eleven couldn't exactly explain that to them without raising their eyebrows. More than he already had, of course.

"Yeah, why did you lie to us?" Lucas snarled. "Why don't you want us to save Will?"

"Leave him alone," Mike told Lucas.

"Mike, think about it: we've been chasing some monster, but did you ever stop to think that maybe he's the monster?" Lucas shouted.

"I said leave him alone!" Mike yelled before attacking Lucas. The two boys began to wrestle, punching and hitting and kicking while Dustin yelled for them to stop.

Eleven stumbled back as images flashing before his eyes.

Adults hitting him, beating him with belts, throwing him into walls and furniture, breaking his bones, and hurting him until he couldn't breathe.

The angry look in sea green eyes, and Eleven was sure the guy was going to attack him.

Fighting with teenage boys in an alley and lying on the ground, beaten and

broken, as they took his money and walked off laughing.

Fighting monsters, the sounds of battle raging around him.

"Stop! STOP!" Eleven yelled before letting loose one long scream. Flames rolled off of his hands, flying into Lucas's face as the boy threw up his hands to protect himself. The flames died to reveal Lucas sobbing in pain on the ground, cradling his arms and hands, which were covered in burns. They could've been worse, but the sight of the burned flesh was almost enough to make Eleven lose his breakfast.

"LUCAS!" Mike shouted as Dustin frantically rifling through his backpack and pulling out a first aid kit. Mike turned to look at Eleven, who hadn't even been this horrified at his powers and what they could do when he opened the gate.

"What is wrong with you?" Mike yelled. *"WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?"*

Mike turned back to Lucas, and Eleven took the opportunity to run. He ran until his legs were aching and there was a stitch in his side, and he literally couldn't run anymore as he collapsed to the forest floor.

Eleven glanced up and found himself staring at a drain pipe... the same drain pipe he'd crawled through to escape The Lab. Eleven lifted his head and stared at the tall fence directly in front of him.

"Why don't you want us to save Will?"

He did want to save Will. In fact, maybe it was his connection to the Upside Down and everything in it, but he felt like he knew Will without ever having met him. Will almost felt like a friend to Eleven, even if they hadn't met. He wanted to save Will. He just didn't want Mike, Lucas, or Dustin to get killed doing it.

"But did you ever stop to think that maybe he's the monster?"

He was the monster. He knew that. He was too dangerous to be around Mike or Lucas or Dustin or anyone.

"If I never hear from him again, it'll be too soon."

Evidently, Mike, Lucas, and Dustin weren't the only ones that hated him.

"And if he is dead... good riddance."

If Mike, Lucas, Dustin, or Will died, there would be funerals (there already had been a funeral for Will) and mourning and school assemblies and months of sadness for their friends and families. If Eleven died, no one would mourn him. Mike, Lucas, and Dustin hated him now. The people from his dreams and the black plane and the radio... most of them believed he was already dead. Except for Nico, but Eleven didn't even know who Nico was, not really. Eleven didn't matter to anyone. He would die and chances are, no one would even notice he was gone.

"WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?"

Will mattered to Mike, and both Mike and Will mattered to Eleven. Eleven was being hunted like a wild animal by the Bad Men and now weird monsters. He'd probably die anyway or end up back in The Lab, and Eleven would rather die than go back to that horrible place.

If he was going to die soon- one way or another- he might as well make sure Will, Mike, Lucas, and Dustin didn't die, too.

Eleven lowered himself to the leaf covered ground, staring at the gaping mouth of the drain pipe.

Then... he began to crawl.

I love feedback (but keep it kind or constructive criticism because any flames will be ignored and reported if necessary), so please tell me what you thought in the form of a review or a PM!

Next chapter is where this story really starts to diverge from the original storyline/plot of Stranger Things and starts to take its own path.

Thank you all for reading! Goodbye, everyone!

7. Evan: On His Own (He's Our Friend)

This chapter is where it really starts to diverge from the original plot of the TV series Stranger Things.

Also, I want to make it clear that Leo (aka Eleven) and Mike are just friends and will not have a romantic relationship.

Guest- as of now, Nico and Leo will not become a couple, but that could change. At the very least, they will have a very good friendship (I'm going for one of those friendships that is so beautiful, it makes people cry, but we'll see).

Jenny.s.72- thank you for the wonderful compliments!

Allans- thank you, and I will try (key word try) to update again soon.

Supworld-issa-world- "Always a good day when I see one of your stories has been updated." That just made my day. Thank you so much, and maybe that will motivate me to update some of my other stories. Thank you!

Disclaimer: I do not own Percy Jackson/Heroes of Olympus or its characters, and I do not own Stranger Things.

Eleven wasn't sure how long he crawled until he poked his head out of the drain pipe and, finding the grounds empty for the time being, emerged from his hiding place.

The Lab was just as cold and intimidating as he remembered it as he crouched down just outside the building and glanced inside. Being late at night, the only ones there were the workaholics who practically lived at The Lab and the janitors; still, every time he saw a white coat, Eleven flinched, and he was hoping against hope that he didn't see Papa. He could handle any of the Bad Men, any of the scientists, any of the security, but if he came face to face with Papa, Eleven might just break down into tears.

Eleven yanked himself back, pressing himself flat against the wall, as

a janitor opened the door and strolled casually into the building, unaware that the thing (the person, more accurately) that had caused so much commotion less than a week ago was standing less than three feet away from him.

Eleven grabbed hold of the door handle and slipped inside of the building.

Eleven shivered from both his apprehension and the cold air. The Lab smelled sterile and clean with the scent of medicine and cleaning supplies in the air. Frigid air seemed to radiate off of the cool metals that most of the equipment was made of. Eleven had to tip toe because the impossibly clean floors squeaked under his feet.

The flashbacks were coming faster, blurring together into a mess of colors and sounds.

Eleven remembered having his blood drawn, sometimes several times a day. Eleven remembered being pumped full of drugs to see how he would react to them. Eleven remembered being tied to tables when he became too... 'unruly,' as the scientists delicately put it. In other words, when Eleven had panic attacks before, during, and sometimes after some especially invasive and painful experiments. Eleven remembered being shocked during a lot of the experiments- the maze they made him run, the tests they made him do to test his intelligence, the tests they made him do to test his physical abilities (speed, strength, endurance, etc.), not to mention his powers, and that was just the tip of the ice berg. Eleven rubbed the crook of his arms and the backs of his hands because overall, he remembered a lot of needles and knew that if he ever saw a needle again, it'd send him into a panic attack.

Eleven shook himself out of his memories as he snuck down the back hall, passing his pathetic excuse for a bedroom (although he supposed he should be grateful that he had a bedroom. Some of the other tests subjects, who were being forced to participate in different experiments, were contained in cages), and found himself standing before the plastic sheet that covered the entrance to the hallway they'd roped off. The Lab where The Gate was.

Eleven swept aside the sheet and stepped inside the hall.

He coughed as he inhaled the particles floating in the toxic air; he'd overheard several conversations and knew the air couldn't kill you immediately, but if you were exposed to it for long enough (a few days, maybe even a few weeks, depending on your overall health beforehand), it would basically poison you and cause your death.

Eleven heard his sneakers tapping lightly against the floor as he traveled further down the hall, trying to avoid looking at the disgusting slime smeared across the walls or listen to the strange groaning that seemed to be coming from everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

Eleven wandered into the destroyed lab, and he unconsciously gasped when he saw The Gate. He'd known it was there, had watched as the fabric of our universe tore apart just enough to create The Gate, but he'd never technically seen The Gate.

It was a hole in the wall, covered in slime and almost appeared to be breathing. A pinkish curtain made entirely out of slime covered The Gate, and Eleven crept towards it.

Eleven lightly touched the curtain, wincing at the ooze that covered his fingers, before pressing on it and tearing it until it fell limply beside The Gate.

Eleven stared at what appeared to be a tunnel, and it looked like it was inhaling and exhaling, the walls moving and undulating with each breath, and Eleven finally understood the saying '*going into the belly of the beast.*'

Eleven pulled himself up and began to crawl, ignoring the way the tunnel squished under his hands, as he inched little by little through the tight, claustrophobic cylinder that this tunnel was. He covered his mouth with his sleeve in hopes of breathing in as little toxic air as possible, and he finally reached the end of the tunnel, where he slowly slid out of the tight space and into an open but much more terrifying setting.

Eleven saw that he was standing in The Lab, but it was different. Corroded and decayed, like it was a neglected building that had been sitting abandoned for years. It was no longer the sterile, clean

environment Eleven had grown accustomed to. This place was dirty and rotten and nasty, an eerie and frightening place that looked like it had been yanked straight out of a horror film.

Eleven gulped before he began wandering down the hallway and exited the building without seeing a soul (not that he really expected to, honestly).

If possible, the outside world was even more terrifying than the eroded version of The Lab as Eleven walked straight up to the metal gate and found it already open with slime coating the lock. He strolled past dead trees and wilting bushes, squinting in the darkness but not wanting to use his powers to create a flame in his hands, for fear of the fire attracting unwanted predators.

Eleven finally emerged from the thick woods and stood where the forest met the town, listening intently but hearing nothing except for his own rattling breathing in the otherwise silent atmosphere.

Eleven closed his eyes and reached out with his powers, trying to search for any signs of life. He found only two living beings in the Upside Down town of Hawkins. One was at the school, and the other was in the woods behind the home of the Byers family. Eleven assumed that in this terrifying time, Will would want to remain close to home, so that was the direction he headed in.

Eleven wiped the blood from his nose and began the short trek to the Byers house and the woods behind it, hoping Will would still be there when Eleven reached the location.

Meanwhile, Mike sat on the couch in the basement, fiddling with the walkie-talkie in his hand. He didn't know what he was expecting-Will's voice, Eleven's maybe... but it didn't matter. All that mattered was the soul crushing crack in his heart, caused by being betrayed by his friend; he'd only know Evan for a short period of time- not even a week- but he felt connected to Eleven in a way he couldn't describe. Maybe it was the terrified, traumatized, and vulnerable look in his eyes that drew Mike in... or maybe it was something else. Dustin only felt connected to Eleven by a deeply rooted curiosity, wanting to know how his powers worked and where he came from and who be

was and why he didn't remember anything from before The Lab.

Mike wasn't sure who he felt more betrayed by. Lucas for accusing Evan of being the monster or Eleven for proving Lucas right.

Mike stood up and attacked Eleven's makeshift bed, tearing it down and stomping on it like Evan, the boy he had called friend, had stomped on his heart.

A knock sounded at the back door, and Mike threw it open, ready to turn Evan away and scream at him for even thinking about coming back, but he stopped short when he saw Dustin.

"Oh, hey, Dustin," Mike muttered, stepping aside to allow his friend inside.

"Did Eleven come back?" Dustin asked.

Mike was shocked by the question. He never thought Dustin cared for Eleven, but Dustin sounded genuinely concerned.

Mike shook his head. "Why are you so worried? He hurt Lucas, remember?"

Dustin shrugged. "So did you."

"But I didn't *burn* him!" Mike exclaimed.

Dustin sighed. "Mike, you were distracted by your anger, and Lucas was distracted by pain, so neither of you saw the look on Eleven's face. Like Eleven believed Lucas when he called Evan a monster. He was horrified by what he'd done, and he ran off. I heard him sobbing and muttering *I'm sorry* until he disappeared into the woods. Would a monster be so distraught over something they'd done like that?"

Mike shook his head. "I guess not, but that doesn't make what he did okay."

"I'm not saying it does," Dustin responded. "But something's been bugging me. A really bad feeling, even more than usual. Mike, I know you're angry, but I know that you still care about him. Heck, I think Lucas even cares about him... deep, deep, deep, *deep* down... but he

does. And I think Eleven is in danger. A lot of it, maybe even more than Will, and we're the only ones that can help him if he is."

Mike swallowed. "You got all of this from a feeling?"

"I know it sounds silly, but I think you can feel it, too," Dustin replied.

Mike didn't say anything because he knew Dustin was right.

"You need to apologize to Lucas."

"What? *Me*? He was the one that was out of line!" Mike yelled.

"You were both out of line, and you know the rule, Mike. You drew first blood," Dustin pointed out.

"But-"

"Mike, we don't have time for this! Eleven is our friend, and even if you're so mad at him that you refuse to even call him that, he's also our only link to Will. You can sit around here blaming everybody except for yourself, but if you do, you might be risking two lives here!" Dustin shouted.

Mike sighed. "Fine. Let's go."

Eleven shivered, pulling Mike's jacket closer around himself, using the scent of his friend and of the place he'd *almost* started to call home for the past week as a comfort. The air was cold and pressing in on him on all sides as he strolled through the woods, trying not to look at the dead tress or the blood spotted grass (and praying that the blood wasn't Will's).

A small fort came into view. It was made of twigs and the size of the average shed with a faded, dirty white sheet, blowing lightly in the wind.

A sign reading *Byers Castle* hung above the entrance. Eleven could sense the presence of a living thing inside.

Will.

Eleven pushed the sheet aside and found a small boy lying on a bed made out of blankets and huddling beneath one, shivering. His hair was damp and greasy; his skin was unnaturally pale; and the tips of his fingers and his lips were tinted blue from the cold. He looked exhausted and starved, and every time he drew in a breath, Eleven could almost hear his lungs crackling after such a long time exposed to the toxic air.

Eleven knelt beside Will and took his hand. Will pried his eyes open and barely managed to glance up at Eleven.

"Who are you?" He rasped, and Eleven flinched at his voice and worried over how dehydrated he was. Eleven didn't think there was any water in the Upside Down, and if there was, it certainly wasn't clean water, and he knew that if the toxic air didn't kill Will first, his obvious dehydration would.

"My name is Evan," Eleven murmured. "I'm a friend of Mike's." (*if I even have the right to call myself his friend anymore.*) "And I'm going to get you out of here, okay? But you're going to have to trust me."

Will contemplated that, but he didn't have any other choice. He was trapped in a freezing cold world with the Monster, and if Evan tried to hurt him, he couldn't exactly run. He looked like he could barely stand.

Evan closed his eyes and heated up his body a few degrees. Not enough to burn Will, but enough to warm the freezing cold child. After that, Eleven helped Will stand, nearly buckling under his weight, but Eleven refused to give up as he half-carried-half-dragged Will out of the fort and into the woods.

The fallen leaves and twigs cracked under their feet, and Eleven could just barely see the barbed wire on the top of the fence that surrounded The Lab in the distance... when he heard a familiar screech.

Eleven reached out with his powers, and his eyes shot open, widening when he sensed the presence of the Monster. It was coming towards

them. And fast. It would be there within a minute for sure.

Eleven put Will on his feet, glad when he realized that the heat had given Will enough strength to stand on his own. He was by no means steady, but it was enough.

"Will, do you see that fence?" Eleven asked, pointing at it.

Will nodded.

"I need you to go there. The gate is already open. Go inside the building and stand out of sight of the door. Wait for me. I'll be there soon. Now go! RUN!" Evan shouted as the screech sounded, much closer than before.

Will didn't want to leave his savior alone to fight the Monster, but he didn't argue as he sprinted towards The Lab. He wanted to stay and help, but what could he do? He'd gone who knows how many days without food or water; he was still weak from the cold that had invaded his body during his stay in this dimension; and he was sure that this air was toxic if his constantly labored breathing told him anything.

Eleven turned to see the Monster approaching, and his eyes narrowed.

"You've hurt me enough," Eleven mumbled. "I will not let you hurt Will ever again."

He wasn't sure why he was so protective of a kid he'd only just met, but then again, he was also very protective of Mike, Dustin, and even Lucas. They were like his younger brothers, even though he's pretty sure at least one of them is older than him.

Eleven didn't remember much from his past, but he remembered one thing: nobody messes with his family and gets away with it.

Eleven vaguely wonders about the family he had before The Lab and how protective he must've been over them, but he didn't have time to think about it for any longer as he raised his hand towards the rapidly approaching Monster and felt his entire body heat up.

It was time to face the Monster for the first but certainly not the last time.

Lucas let them into his house, which surprised Mike, and Mike sighed.

"I drew first blood, so it's only fair that I step up and apologize. I shouldn't have attacked you like that and especially not when I was so angry. I'm sorry," Mike stated.

Lucas nodded. "You're forgiven. On one condition. The weirdo has to go."

"That's not going to happen."

"What?" Mike and Lucas squawked as they turned around to face Dustin, who had surprisingly been the one to speak.

"Lucas," Dustin said. "I barely know anything about this kid, and neither do you, but did you ever stop and think that maybe... he was trying to protect us? That he wanted to save Will, but he didn't want us to die doing it? Or... and while I hope this isn't true, maybe he was protecting us by not telling us that Will is in a really horrible place and that he's as good as dead? Did you ever stop and think that maybe he was trying to protect us and not hurt us?"

"Lucas, I understand why you're nervous around this kid, but I know you care about him, and... I also know that we all have the same feeling. The feeling that Evan is in danger. And Lucas, if you won't admit that you care about him, he's also our only link to Will. We need to find him."

"Did you see what he did to my hands?" Lucas demanded, holding up his bandaged hands.

"Yes, but I also saw his face, Lucas. Neither of you did. Evan... he looked broken, ashamed of what he'd done. He ran away, crying and saying *I'm sorry* over and over again. Lucas, I know you think Evan is the Monster, but monsters don't have a conscious," Dustin pointed out.

Before Lucas could respond, Mike's walkie-talkie crackled with static somewhere in his bag.

Mike frowned and pulled the device out of his bag and stared at it before his eyes widened as the static became words.

"Who are you?" A weak mumble- an all too familiar voice- sounded.

"Will," Lucas gasped.

"But that's impossible. Evan isn't here, so how..." Mike trailed off as someone else on the walkie-talkie spoke.

"My name is Evan."

Mike gasped as Eleven's voice travelled over the walkie-talkie.

"I'm a friend of Mike's, and I'm going to get you out of here, but you have to trust me, okay?"

The walkie-talkie fell silent.

"How..." Lucas couldn't even get the words out.

Dustin's eyes widened as the truth hit him.

"Lucas, you said that Evan didn't want us to save Will when you yelled at him. What if he tried to prove you wrong?" Dustin asked.

Lucas frowned, not wanting to believe what Dustin was saying. He also didn't want to believe that he might actually care about the weirdo either, but they had bigger problems than that right now.

"You guys don't think Eleven would try to save Will by himself, do you?" Dustin murmured.

No one said anything for a long time after Dustin said that.

The Monster screeched in pain as its body heated up to an unbearable temperature. Evan aimed a fire ball at its feet, burning the monster's skin until it was in too much pain to stand before running off.

Evan made it several yards away from the Monster and was standing outside the metal gate of The Lab when he saw something glinting in the grass.

Evan picked it up and saw it was a strange golden coin. It looked like something they would use in Ancient times. Maybe Greek.

Evan slipped it into his pocket without giving his hand the conscious command to do so before sprinting inside the building.

"Will? Will?"

No response.

"Will!"

"Evan?"

Evan turned and sighed in relief when he saw Will standing in the shadows, well out of sight as Evan had commanded him to do so.

"Let's get out of here," Evan told the frightened and shivering boy before offering his hand to Will.

Will stared at the hand with caution, probably because he'd seen Eleven shoot a fire ball at the Monster. He made a judgment call.

Will gave Evan a small smile before taking his hand.

Dustin stared at his compass as they rode their bikes on the rarely used gravel road.

"Keep going straight," he ordered.

"Guys?"

Dustin glanced up at Lucas's slightly nervous tone, and he cursed when he saw Troy and his friend on their own bikes behind them... and they were gaining. And boy, did Troy look mad.

"Go!" Dustin yelled, and they began racing their bikes, but Troy and

his friend had better bikes, longer legs, and better endurance. Hoping they could run into the woods and disappear amongst the trees, the three boys abandoned their bikes and continued on foot.

Troy and his friend followed their example and started chasing them. Lucas pulled ahead, easily, Mike a little farther behind, but Dustin hadn't gone a few yards before he couldn't run any further and started to slow down until he almost came to a complete stop.

Hands grabbed Dustin, and the scuffle started. Dustin was fighting blindly against Troy and his friend while Mike and Lucas returned to his side and entered the fight, attempting to free their friend.

Lucas was grabbed by Troy's burly friend, who only laughed when Lucas screamed and thrashed uselessly in the bully's hold.

Mike, the only one of them that was free, felt his eyes widen in fear as Troy pulled out a pocket knife and held it against Dustin's throat.

"What do you want?" Mike screamed.

"That kid! The kid who flipped me! Who is he?" Troy asked.

"He's our friend," Lucas answered. On a normal occasion, Mike would've been glad Lucas finally called Evan their friend, but right now, he was too scared.

"What's his name? I've never seen before!" Troy yelled.

"His name is Evan," Mike snarled. Not knowing what else to do, he decided to tell Troy an edited version of the truth. "We found him a week ago in the woods. He has amnesia and doesn't know where he comes from, so we've been helping him! Now let them go!"

"No! I want revenge on that kid for humiliating me," Troy spat. "And what better way to get my revenge than take my anger out on his little friends?"

He's officially gone crazy, Mike thought as he stared at the crazed look in Troy's eyes.

"Jump," Troy ordered, jerking his head at the edge of the ravine less

than three feet away from them.

"Mike!" Lucas shouted. "Don't do it!"

"Maybe I should cut out the rest of his baby teeth," Troy muttered, tracing the blade down Dustin's chin.

Mike swallowed. "Okay, okay! Just hold on!" Mike begged before approaching the edge of the ravine.

"Mike, don't! Please! I don't need my baby teeth, Mike!"

"Mike, stop!"

He could vaguely hear his friends shouting in the background, but Mike's mind was elsewhere.

"Did you ever stop and think that maybe... he was trying to protect us?"

Mike's mind flashed back to all the times Evan had protected them, had helped them. He thought about Evan flipping Troy to stop the bully from pounding Mike. He thought about Evan using his powers to channel Will on the radio in Mr. Clarke's office, even though it almost killed him. He thought about Evan risking his friendship with Mike, Lucas, and Dustin to protect them by messing up their compasses. He thought about Evan using his powers to protect Mike from Lucas, even though he accidentally injured Lucas in the process. He thought about Evan's voice on the walkie-talkie and how he'd gone to rescue Will on his own, even though Evan knew better than anyone how dangerous the mission would be.

"Did you ever stop and think that maybe... he was trying to protect us?"

Friends protect each other. And Mike would protect Lucas and Dustin until the end.

Mike stepped off the edge of the cliff.

Everyone froze. Troy. James. Dustin. Lucas. No one dared to move for a few seconds.

Troy was horrified as he slowly lowered the knife from Dustin's

throat. He never thought Mike would actually jump. He'd just wanted to scare them, not hurt them and certainly not kill them.

Dustin was the first to move, sprinting to the edge of the ravine, followed by Troy and James and Lucas.

Troy muttered an astonished curse under his breath as they stared down at Mike, who was hovering in mid air several feet above the water.

Mike whimpered in fear as he was jerked upward and carried through the air by nothing until he fell to the ground behind Dustin, Lucas, Troy, and James.

No one understood what had just happened... until Mike looked up, and a small smile came across his face.

The other boys followed his gaze and saw an angry looking Evan approaching them with a glare on his face. On a scale from one to ten, his death glare reached an eleven (no pun intended), and Mike could almost hear Troy and James's hearts thundering in their chests from where he lay on the ground.

Evan glared harder, and Troy screamed as burns appeared out of nowhere, spreading over his hands and arms and some parts of his chest.

James was shoved to the ground by an invisible force, and he stared at Evan in horror.

"He burned me! He burned me!" Troy wailed.

"Go," Evan ordered, stopping a few feet away from them.

Troy and James didn't need to be told twice as James shot to his feet, and the two bullies ran, disappearing into the distance until all that could be heard were their terrified exclamations far away from the four friends.

"Yeah!" Dustin shouted after them. "He's our friend, and he's crazy!"

Mike could hear Dustin saying something else, but he was entirely

focused on Evan, who had blood trickling out of his nose and the tiny space where his ear met his head, the skin and cartilage torn.

Evan fell to the ground and didn't get back up.

Mike shot to his feet and knelt by Evan's side, clutching the boy's hand and whispering his name, urging Evan back into consciousness.

"Evan," Mike murmured in relief as his eyes opened.

Evan swallowed. "Mike," he mumbled. "The Gate. I opened it. Lucas was right. I am the Monster."

"No," surprisingly Lucas disagreed. "You saved Mike. You saved us all. You are not the Monster. You may have hurt me, but you didn't mean to, and you were only trying to protect us this entire time. I'm sorry for what I said."

Lucas, Dustin, and Mike pulled Evan into a tight hug, holding their friend close and finally starting to call Evan friend after such a long time of being unsure whether this boy was indeed a friend or an enemy.

After several long moments, Evan pulled away and looked at the three boys with a small grin. It was only then that Mike noticed that Evan was covered in some kind of purplish ooze and smelled disgusting, like the smell that lingers underground but ten times worse. Mike and the other two boys had been so distracted by Evan's return and the way he rescued Mike and chased off Troy and James that they hadn't even noticed his appearance until now.

"There is something else," Evan told them before glancing over his shoulder.

Mike followed his gaze, and the three other boys watched in astonishment as a familiar boy emerged from the trees surrounding the area. He was dirty and pale and sickly looking and slightly blue from the cold environment he'd been forced to live in for the past week, but they'd recognize him anywhere.

Will.

Please leave a review! Thanks for reading! Goodbye, everyone!